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TESIS DOCTORAL

Self-Consciousness, Caring, Relationality: an Investigation into the Experience of Shame and its Ethical Role

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To my parents, Pilar and Pepe.

And in loving memory of two men who gave me
their support, but passed away before they could see
this work finished: my grandfather, Antonio,
and my co-supervisor for too short a time, Peter Goldie.

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I am grateful to the editors of *PhaenEx: Journal of Existential and Phenomenological Theory and Culture*, for their permission to reproduce a very substantial part of my paper "Social Shame vs. Private Shame: A Real Dichotomy?" *PhaenEx*, Vol. 8, No. 1, 2013, p. 28-58. Several slightly revised excerpts of this paper can be found in the Introduction and in chapters 1, 2 and 3.

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INTRODUCTION AND METHODOLOGY

In the studies of emotion, shame is classified under several labels: a self-conscious emotion, an emotion of self-assessment, a social emotion, and a moral emotion. All of them are supposed to pick out a defining characteristic of shame. Though all of these labels will be under scrutiny at some point in this dissertation, my primary focus is the last label. My guiding question is: is shame a moral emotion? Does it have a fundamental relationship to ethics or the ethical?[1] Does it have a crucial role or significance in this respect? If so, what exactly? Or is ethics rather a contingent aspect of some prominent episodes of shame? This is the broad question that I intend to explore and clarify throughout this study. In my view, shame is not a unitary phenomenon, but comes in a range of varieties that are linked by what Wittgenstein (1953) called family resemblance. Not all of them have moral significance or a moral role, but I will argue that a general capacity to feel shame, especially the central varieties of discretion shame and disgrace shame, is a fundamental part of the sensibilities that make us ethical, it is a fundamental element of the ground from which ethics can take off. By this, I do not mean that shame is always virtuous or always guided by moral concerns, but rather that it discloses a form of subjectivity that stands in and is constituted by a particular form of relationality and responsiveness to others and to itself, a form of interdependence that combines vulnerability and responsibility.

On a first rough approach, and leaving aside for the time being some important nuances, accounts of shame as a moral emotion could be divided in two camps. On the one hand, there are the sympathetic accounts that, in an Aristotelian spirit, describe it as a sort of alarm signal that points out our mistakes and allows us to learn from them. Shame, for the authors who take this sort of view, such as Bernard Williams (2008) or Max Scheler (1957), is primarily a positive force that pushes us in the direction of becoming better people. On the other hand, we can find the negative accounts, which cast shame as a primitive vestige of evolution that nowadays does much more harm than good: it undermines autonomy, it places us at the mercy of other people's opinions, making us especially vulnerable to more powerful, more authoritative or higher ranking individuals, and it damages self-esteem and

[1] There is a traditional distinction (going back all the way to Hegel) between morality and ethics, which links the first to duty and the second to *eudaimonia* (happiness, or human flourishing). I say more on that distinction and its limits in chapter 2, where I also explain, following Williams (2013), why I find the framework of ethics more illuminating to think about the issues that I address in this dissertation.

fosters antisocial, even aggressive behavior.[2] On these accounts, favored by authors like June Price Tangney (2005) or Ruth Leys (2009), shame does not contribute to ethics at all, but rather pulls us in unethical directions. This picture is obviously far too black-and-white, and no interesting account actually ignores the complexities and nuances of shame, but it is nevertheless easy to perceive a generally positive or negative tonality coloring most discussions of its ethical role.

In my view, however, for reasons that will become apparent throughout this dissertation, it seems hardly possible, perhaps even pointless, to establish uncontroversially whether shame is ethically good or bad, so this might not be the best way to frame the discussion. Should we even ask the question in those terms? Both possibilities are perfectly plausible and supported by good examples, so either we are discussing two different phenomena with a family resemblance, or the same phenomenon can have either negative or positive consequences depending on other factors (a conclusion which is hardly surprising when talking about emotions). If the latter is assumed to be the case, there is of course a third obvious option: neutrality, where "neutrality" does not consist in offering a balanced picture of the positive and negative aspects of shame. Rather, what I am calling neutral accounts, such as those offered by Jean-Paul Sartre (1972) or by Emmanuel Lévinas (2003) in *On Escape*, are neutral in that they do not take shame to be fundamentally ethical (at least not in any obvious or explicit way), so that the question of its being virtuous or vicious depends on other factors, and not on anything inherent in the emotion itself. Shame can of course arise in situations where ethical concerns are at stake, but this is just one possibility. According to these accounts, what characterizes shame is not a connection to ethics, but a certain kind of self-relation or self-acquaintance. Shame is not a moral, but an ontological, emotion, which reveals, and for some authors even constitutes, a certain kind of subjectivity, albeit not specifically an ethical kind. For my part, my project is to move beyond the virtuous-vicious dichotomy, while still retaining a sense of the ethical significance of shame. In order to do that, I explore the self-conscious and the evaluative dimensions of shame, and offer an account of how they are articulated in this phenomenon.

SCOPE, AIMS AND OUTLINE OF THIS DISSERTATION

Before providing a detailed outline of my dissertation, some words on the scope of my work are in order. In my study of shame as a moral emotion, I engage with authors from different countries,

[2] Not all critics rely on evolutionary arguments to make this case, but they all share the view that shame is primitive in one sense or another (belonging to unsophisticated cultures, or to a very young age in which one's rationality is not mature enough to provide adequate moral guidance).

cultures, mother tongues and historical periods. Are not social, cultural and historical factors crucial in shaping emotional experience? As Javier Moscoso (2012) shows in his most recent book, even something that we could intuitively think of as a basic, raw biological phenomenon that we share with all kinds of animals, such as pain, can change shape, meaning and contours throughout cultural history in such dramatic ways as to throw into question the appropriateness of actually speaking of the same experience. If that is the case of pain, what to make of a much more complex emotion like shame? Is shame in Spain the same as shame in Japan? Is shame for the modern cultural heirs of Ancient Greece the same as it was for Homer? Does it mean the same, does it have the same value, does it motivate people in the same way?

This worry is part of why I choose to speak of the varieties of an emotion and of family resemblance. I am aware of the profound contextual, cultural and historical variations that our emotional experiences are subject to, although unfortunately I lack precise and extensive knowledge of *all* the cultural and historical varieties of just one emotional family. If this is the case, in order to say something sensible and correct, should we not rather circumscribe the study of emotion to very specific cultural and temporal contexts, the way historians of emotions do? This is of course one possibility, but my aim here is not to describe in detail one specific, culturally and historically circumscribed variety of shame, but to study the way in which a range of phenomena of this family are connected to ethics. We should distinguish here two levels of analysis: the conventional level and the structural level.[3] It is one thing to study the norms and conventions that govern privacy, social respectability, self-respect, dignity and the like in one culture. This is the level to which belong many of the discussions of the positive or negative role of shame in ethics. It is yet another thing to seek to give a philosophical account of how these conventions are possible, of the structures that underlie them and what they imply (what would a society look like without some form of conventions of the shameful?). Indeed, as Carl Schneider (1977, xix) argues, it makes perfect sense to strive to change some or all the conventions of the shameful in one society, to denounce them as oppressive or immoral, while still valuing positively the human capacity for shame. Indeed, he argues that "to extirpate shame is to cripple our humanity," and I agree.

In *Shame and Necessity*, Bernard Williams points out the significant difference between the ancient Greek concept of *aidos* and the English concept of shame, which correspond to two very different systems of social respectability. Yet by the time he points this out, he has already been using the English word 'shame' quite naturally for over 80 pages to both translate *aidos* and refer to the contemporary English meaning of the word 'shame,' and this has worked smoothly. That is precisely

[3] Thanks to Glenda Satne for pressing me to clarify this point.

what he wants to underscore, though: that the translation delivers "so much that is familiar to us from our acquaintance with what we call 'shame'" (Williams 2008, 88). Such is also the case of the Japanese partial equivalent of shame in Ruth Benedict's classic, if controversial, study of Japan in the 1940s, *The Chrysantemum and the Sword*. Contested as it is, her distinction of "shame cultures" versus "guilt cultures" picked out some differences that made Japanese ways of thinking, feeling and acting more intelligible to Americans at the time, because their concept of shame partially, if not exactly, overlaps with its Japanese counterpart(s).[4] But to paraphrase Ortega y Gasset (1992), the misery and splendor of translation both depend on the fact that equivalence is always only partial. Partial translatability points towards a common ground, in any case; towards a basis of experience that helps us understand other people's experiences through historical and cultural variations. Whether that basis is the result in some way or another of genetics, neurological hard-wiring or the like is an entirely different matter, on which I will not speculate. My investigation focuses on the level of experience, its meaning and structure. For practical reasons, such as time restrictions, familiarity with the authors, and sharing a general background, the vast majority of my sources come from what could be called the Western cultural tradition (a tradition that is far from being unified and homogeneous), which will inevitably introduce some sort of bias. The structures of experience cannot be easily disentangled from actual phenomena and the conventions that inform them. My aim here is to investigate the structures without abstracting away the phenomena.

The structure of my dissertation is as follows: in chapter 1 I set up the framework for the remaining discussion by exploring common definitions and accounts of shame, explaining the main debates around them and discussing different phenomena in the shame family that can shed some light on two central issues that must be addressed by any account of the ethical value of shame: selfhood and normativity. I then move on to a more detailed discussion of shame as a moral emotion (chapter 2), which implies a special focus on self-assessment and autonomy, and shame in the phenomenological tradition (chapter 3), where the focus is on self-consciousness, exposure, and on how shame discloses us as intersubjective beings. In chapter 4, I engage in a philosophical reading of J. M Coetzee's (1999) novel *Disgrace*, where I apply and deepen some of the insights of previous chapters. Finally, in chapter 5 I sum up the main conclusions from each chapter and bring them together into my account of shame as ethical in a weak sense: not in the sense of consistently fostering virtuous behavior, but in the sense of entailing ways of relating to self and others that are part and parcel of being ethical.

Chapter 1, "Shame: Definitions, Varieties and Borders" is aimed at framing the questions of this study and sketching a preliminary picture of shame that can serve as a starting point. I proceed by stating

[4] One of the overlaps is precisely the ethical relevance of some central members of this emotional family.

and examining the various features that most authors take to be central to this emotion, and then contrasting shame with some of its 'cousins' in the same emotional family. Central questions will be: Are we even sure that we are talking about one and the same phenomenon every time we label something as shame? Can all paradigmatic cases of shame be subsumed under a single account? Dan Zahavi (2012, 311–12) has recently suggested that trying to find an explanation that fits all cases might not be possible, and it might create more problems than it solves. This does not mean, however, that the varieties of shame have nothing in common with one other; quite the opposite. It is indeed highly interesting and revealing to investigate what they do have in common and how do they differ, to look at how language(s) and culture(s) map emotional territory and establish zones of distinction and indistinction that can change through time. Controversies around the definitions and workings of shame have to do either with different views of the type or aspect of selfhood at stake in shame, or with the role that other people play in shame, its social dimension. As far as the self of shame is concerned, I discuss two issues, the possibility of other-directed shame and the meaning of the frequent claim that in shame the "whole self" is involved. In analyzing these debates, I move towards a view of the subject of shame as an embodied and situated being that depends on the other to be singularized, and of the selfhood at stake here as a dynamic process of self-individuation. As for the role of others in shame, in this chapter I analyze the question of whether audiences are necessary for shame, concluding that this is not always the case. More remains to be said, however, because there are other ways of interpreting the claim that shame is social, and I do this in the following chapters.

In chapter 2, "Shame as a Moral Emotion: Shame, Prosociality and Autonomy," I engage with various accounts of the role that shame plays in the territories of morality or ethics, and more specifically with the accounts offered by June Tangney and Ronda Dearing (who think it is immoral), and Julien Deonna, Raffaele Rodogno and Fabrice Teroni, Bernard Williams, and Cheshire Calhoun (who all, for different reasons, think it has a positive role in this domain). Here again I focus on the kind of selfhood that emerges from these accounts, paying particular attention to the evaluative and normative dimensions that come into play when we try to elucidate the ethical significance of shame. Shame under these descriptions seems to be quite cognitively demanding, involving reflective self-consciousness and a self-critical stance. But is this indeed so?

Chapter 3, "Diving Deep into the Shame Experience: Self-Acquaintance and Human Relationality," focuses on accounts that take the exposure of self and self-acquaintance to be the key aspects of shame. I draw mainly on two phenomenologists, namely the early Emmanuel Lévinas and Jean-Paul Sartre, to understand shame as exposure and self-revelation. For these authors, the key to shame is that in it I become exposed and discover an aspect of my being. I am revealed to myself. But not just that: in Lévinas' (2003, 64) powerful phrase, I am revealed as "being riveted to myself," unable to escape from

my own being. However, this early Lévinasian account lends itself to overly solipsistic intepretations, such Giorgio Agamben's (1999). Other phenomenologists, however, notably Jean-Paul Sartre (1969) (and Lévinas himself in later writings), show in their analyses of shame that intersubjectivity, the relation to another subject, is of special relevance to the disclosure of the self to itself in shame. Indeed, I argue through Sartre that what is disclosed in shame is our being-for-Others, the fact that a whole dimension of our being depends on our relations with them. Therefore, the notions of exposure, intersubjectivity and recognition come under special scrutiny in this chapter, and in closing, I test their validity for making sense of shame through a Cavellian reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Cavell 1995).

In chapter 4, "Shame, Self-deceit and Caring: the Case of J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*," I give a philosophical reading and analysis of Coetzee's controversial masterpiece *Disgrace*, which contains a particularly rich exploration of the interactions between public norms and standards, self-reflection, self-assessment and ethical sensitivity, with shame and other related emotions playing a central role. The novel shows us a process of transformation and moral learning where shame is pervasively present and plays many different roles, from the more destructive ones to the constructive and transforming ones. In many ways, as is the case in much of Coetzee's work, *Disgrace* is an extended and enigmatic reflection on how to be, or learn to be, moral in a world where all public moral standards have been destroyed or corrupted. In this context, the role of the emotions, particularly moral emotions such as shame and its relatives, is essential. I look at how shame, disgrace and humiliation push and pull the main character in different directions, and I extract some preliminary conclusions on the kind of selfhood that is connected to a capacity for moral shame. The conclusion I draw from this reading is not that shame makes the main character in the novel an ethically virtuous person. On its own, it does not. But together with other factors, his shame works towards and supports his change of sensibilities towards others.

Lastly, in chapter 5, "Conclusions: Shame, Self-Consciousness, Relationality and Caring," I wrap up and articulate the insights from the previous chapters and draw the conclusions that lead me to the view that the capacity to feel shame, in its central varieties of disgrace shame and discretion shame, is a central part of our ethical sensibilities. First and foremost because, as Sartre (1969) argues, shame is essentially intersubjective and in it I recognize the other as subject. But also because, crucially, I recognize the other through becoming aware of my own vulnerability and dependence on her. This relatedness can motivate ethical learning and can be a ground for self-reflection and self-assessment. Shame can go wrong in ethical terms, of course; it can be narcissistic, it does not guarantee a proper openness to others and it does not substitute the fundamental roles that rationality and full moral

normativity play in ethics. But without the capacity for it, there might not even be a space for self-reflection and for full moral reasons to operate in our lives.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology I use is purely philosophical: phenomenological description and analysis, some conceptual analysis, and hermeneutics. I engage with some empirical literature, mainly psychological studies, but I have not conducted any empirical studies myself. To enrich my investigation as much as possible, I rely on insights and accounts from different disciplines (philosophy of course, mainly phenomenology and analytic philosophy of emotion, as well as psychology and literature) and very heterogeneous sources that, in my view, can illuminate one or the other aspect of shame. As I indicated above, I do not mean to imply that shame has been a perfectly unitary and stable phenomenon throughout history, nor that different approaches and narratives are interested in it in the same ways. Quite the opposite. The value is precisely to be found in heterogeneity. The complexity and variety of emotional phenomena is such that accounts of such phenomena may only be adequate if taking into consideration multiple perspectives.

Besides philosophy, the sources informing my study are psychology and literary fiction, as I believe both can greatly enrich phenomenological philosophy, and furnish a view to better understand the phenomenon I am studying. In looking at these various sources, the idea is to engage with different ways of looking at the same phenomenon that can open avenues for thought, challenge deep-seated assumptions and prompt reflection on the pertinence of the questions that one, as a philosopher, is asking, and on those that one is not asking but perhaps should be. Most empirical psychology adopts the third-person perspective of science, aimed at generality, universalizability, prediction, and manipulation.[5] Though there are good reasons to doubt that consciousness can be successfully studied and understood from a purely third-person perspective, or a "view from nowhere," psychology's emphasis qua science on intersubjective verification through systematic empirical observation, verifiability and replicability of data is powerful and valuable. Empirical psychology may serve as a good check against the excessive abstraction in moral philosophy, which Bernard Williams (2013) so

[5] I write 'most' because the third-personal stance is being criticized from within by some powerful voices: for example, Vasudevi Reddy (2008), whom I will be relying on for her views on the development of shame, has been working hard in her labs to make experimental procedures as second-personal as possible. The aspiration to knowledge and truthfulness is of course intact: indeed, the criticism goes precisely in the direction that the third-personal approach is too distorting of reality to deliver reliable knowledge in developmental psychology. But these are complex epistemological issues that I cannot address here.

deplored, and offer challenges and questions to the philosopher in the form of new territory to explore, or findings that need to be better explained and conceptualized.[6] It is in this sense that Shaun Gallagher and Dan Zahavi (2012, 33) argue that integrating phenomenology and science will contribute to rendering a fuller account of experience.

Something similar holds in the case of literary fiction, in my view, although here the perspective is very different. Literature is work of the imagination, work that has aesthetic or expressive aims, and is not concerned with truth or knowledge in the same ways as science or philosophy—although it would be wrong to say that it is not concerned with truth or knowledge *at all*.[7] Siri Hustvedt (2011), for instance, emphasizes that the only restriction for a narrative to work is "emotional truth." There are no thematic or formal restrictions, but the story has to ring true at a deeper level, has to make sense emotionally and experientially, or else it will fail, it will be incapable of speaking to us. This is why, arguing against the pervasiveness of lifeless thought experiments and the like in moral philosophy, Williams (2008, 13) writes: "what philosophers will lay before themselves and their readers as an alternative to literature will not be life, but bad literature." And bad literature, of course, is untrue to our emotional and experiential life, while good literature can illuminate and expand it.

To sum up, in looking at these various sources (philosophical, psychological, literary), the idea is to find puzzles, test cases, counterexamples and challenges that can help me render a fuller picture of the experience of shame. The aim is to engage with different ways of looking at the same problem that can bring new aspects into focus. Siri Hustvedt (2011) claims that all these are different forms of intellectual play. I engage with psychology and literature as ways of playing with and testing ideas, as sources of inspiration, philosophical insights and challenges, as contributions one ought to take into account in trying to elucidate the meaning and value of emotion.

[6] Psychology, of course, relies on its own (not unproblematic) form of abstraction, but it is of a very different kind than the abstraction of systematic moral philosophy.
[7] I say a little more about the insights one can obtain from literature and the kind of truth it is concerned with in chapter 4.

CHAPTER 1
SHAME: DEFINITIONS, VARIETIES AND BORDERS

Before we can proceed to other questions, it is important to try to pin down the phenomenon we are studying. What is shame? My aim in this chapter, however, is not to arrive at a comprehensive definition accounting for *all* cases of what we call shame, nor to stipulate a list of necessary and sufficient features that qualify some experiences, and disqualify others, as shame experiences. The immediate reason for this is that the question of what shame may be will remain an issue throughout this entire study. The more general reason is the concern, which I share with Dan Zahavi's (2012, 311–12), that a comprehensive definition of shame may overlook important differences among varieties, and thus obscure the issue rather than illuminate it. I therefore don't see such a definition as crucial for my purposes. This does not mean, however, that the varieties of shame have nothing in common with one another; quite the opposite. It is indeed highly interesting and revealing to investigate what they do have in common and how they do differ, to look at how language(s) and culture(s) map emotional territory and establish zones of distinction and indistinction that can change through time (for a very interesting discussion from the point of view of psychology and cross-cultural studies, see Elison 2005). Self-conscious emotions are complex and heavily mediated by culture, and, as I said in the Introduction, their belonging together can be best understood as a matter of family resemblance. This chapter is therefore aimed at sketching a preliminary picture of shame that can frame the subsequent discussions and serve as a starting point for them. In it, I review some of the central features that have been emphasized in studies of shame and contrast shame with related emotions in the same family. My goal is ultimately to study the underlying structural features of consciousness that make them possible. The aim of this chapter, then, is not to establish a definition of shame, but to give an overview of how it is presented in the literature and of the main issues at stake in the discussions, in order to bring into clear focus the questions I will be tackling later in more detail.

WHAT IS AN EMOTION?

In order to start framing my investigation, let me first take a step back and say a few words about emotions in general. To the best of my knowledge, the idea that shame is an emotion is not in the least disputed, but there are many different theories regarding the nature and workings of emotions and the adequacy of taking 'emotion' to be a general category, including Paul Griffiths' (1997) popular but

highly disputed view that it is not a useful one for scientific investigation (more on this below). My aim in this study is not to enter into this wider debate, but rather, as I stated above, to study in depth the emotion of shame in its various differentiations. With that in mind, here I will simply sketch some of the main positions in the debate on emotions and state which views I endorse, in order to set the stage for the investigation that will follow.

Philosophical views on emotion can be classified in several different ways, but I will start with a very general—and therefore a bit crude—but helpful one that Paul Griffiths uses in a recent article. Griffiths (2013) distinguishes between non-naturalistic approaches that seek to make sense of emotions in terms of meaning and phenomenology, i.e., using purely philosophical methods, and naturalistic approaches that see themselves as continuous with the sciences of the mind and fully take into account their results and discoveries. It should be noted, however, that there are approaches that recognize the independence of philosophy and the important and necessary contribution that specifically philosophical insights make to these issues, while also recognizing the crucial contributions of science, and the need for philosophy to fully take them into account. Dan Zahavi's is one such approach, and this is also the kind of position I am adopting in this study. In any case, the issue at stake is how large a role (neuro)biology should play in our understanding of what an emotion is. Put in another way, what makes of an emotion an emotion? Brain processes or experiential aspects? Physiological changes or 'what we care about'? (see Solomon 2006a, 414–415). Under one aspect or another, this issue is at stake both in continental and in analytic approaches to emotion, although it tends to be more prominent in the analytic debates.

After a few decades of lively discussion, analytic philosophers of emotion have divided, roughly, into three main currents: cognitivists (among them Martha Nussbaum and the early Robert Solomon[8]), who, often inspired by the Stoic tradition, think about emotions as judgments, with a distinctive and characteristic cognitive content; neo-Jamesian feeling theorists (like Jesse Prinz or Jenefer Robinson), who stress the primordial importance of feeling and non-cognitive elements, so that for them emotions are, as William James thought, first and foremost feelings of bodily changes; and perceptual theorists (such a Ronald de Sousa and Amélie Rorty), who conceptualize emotions as ways of "seeing as," seeing the world under a certain aspect, or according to a certain pattern of salience that highlights some features rather than others. The main objection faced by cognitive theories is that they overintellectualize emotion, so that on these views emotion seems not to be essentially different than cold judgment. The main objections to feeling theories are first that, as I explain below, they have

[8] Solomon was clearly a cognitivist in his now classic *The Passions* (Solomon 1976), which for a long time made him figure as probably *the* most prominent cognitivist, but he adjusted and ultimately changed his views in his later papers (see Solomon 2006b).

problems accounting for the intentionality of emotions, making them seem entirely subjective and not connected to the world at all, and second, that if bodily responses are what defines emotions, these responses do not seem to be specific enough to account for the wide variety (and cultural variability) of human emotion. The same bodily responses seem to underlie different emotions, so if that is all they are, how can we discriminate between them? Perceptual theories aim at offering a model that explains how a bodily change can be "about the world" by giving accounts of emotions as forms of perception, but the issue of how exactly perception puts us in touch with reality is a very old and disputed problem that is still hotly debated in the philosophy of perception, so it is not entirely clear to what extent the analogy can do the work it is meant to do.

This brings us to one of the main issues of debate in the philosophy of mind in general and the philosophy of emotion in particular. The issue in question is intentionality, a concept that Franz Brentano took from scholasticism and introduced into phenomenology and what later on became the philosophy of mind with its current technical meaning, and which Edmund Husserl investigated and developed in great depth. Intentionality refers to the quality of some mental states to be about something: as opposed to other affective phenomena, such as moods, emotions are intentional, i.e., directed at something in the world.[9] In other words, emotions are about something, they have an object of focus. I can be sad or happy, as we commonly say, "for no reason," without my sadness or happiness focusing on anything in particular. But when I feel love, or fear, or shame, those experiences are focused on someone or something: I love my partner, I am afraid of that rabid dog, I am ashamed of having told a lie to my friend. One of the ways to think about the intentionality of emotions is in terms of what Anthony Kenny (2003) calls "formal objects": the love I feel for my partner and the anger I may on occasion feel at him are directed at the same person, but not at the same formal object. The formal objects of these emotions are respectively "the lovable" and "the offensive," and when particular objects elicit these emotions, they are grasped under these aspects: I love my-partner-as-lovable and I am angry at him-as-someone-who-offended-me. Understood in this way, emotions track values and are defined by their objects (not by any underlying bodily responses), but a complicated question here is whether these values are subjective or objective. Of course, if emotions are conceived, as in the James-Lange theory, as mere feelings of bodily changes, they turn out to be purely subjective and not to put us in touch—at least not directly—with anything in the world. Peter Goldie's idea is that bodily feelings are also intentional, they are "feeling towards," they have "borrowed intentionality" (Goldie 2000). He thinks that the biological basis and development of emotions are similar to those of

[9] These claims are by no means uncontroversial and raise various questions: is it true that moods are objectless? Should we not conceive the object of moods in different, wider terms, instead of saying they are objectless? This is a complicated issue that cannot be easily glossed over, but this is not the place to go into such debates. Nothing crucial to my study of shame hangs on these issues.

language in Chomsky's theory: we humans have generic biological emotional capabilities, which are not developed or specified at birth, but which get their shape, specificity, and complexity through interaction and enculturation. Emotions for Goldie (2000, 98–101) are bodily responses that acquire focus, specificity and complexity through non-biological mechanisms, and are importantly defined by them: that is how feelings acquire intentionality. I will be assuming that emotions are intentional and track values as formal objects.

Continental philosophers, especially those in the phenomenological tradition, have devoted sustained attention to emotions, and more generally the affective life, long before the debate started in analytic philosophy. For Max Scheler (1973), all experience is primarily value-laden: we do not first experience the world as cold and devoid of value, but rather the other way around—perceiving something this way requires a conscious effort (see Zahavi 2010, 182). The world is primarily perceived not in a neutral way, but as beautiful, or disagreeable, or welcoming, etc., in other words: in a meaningful way. And in Scheler's view, this meaning-giving is not carried out by the intellect, but by the "heart," it is affective (Scheler 1973, 63). Our awareness of the world rests on an "emotional a priori" (see Solomon 2006a, 413).

This anticipates Martin Heidegger's notion of *Befindlichkeit*: sensitivity, disposedness, attunement or openness to the world. This *Befindlichkeit* or disposedness is the condition of possibility of intentionality, for understanding and disclosing the world under a certain aspect, and therefore, for emotion. Heidegger's (2008) studies of affective life focus on moods, not emotions, but moods for Heidegger have a similar structure to emotions, so his views on moods are helpful here. As Solomon (2006a, 417) explains, Heidegger does not conceive moods as objectless, but as directed at an object that is wider and fuzzier than the typical objects of emotions, they "are directed towards *the world*, and, on this view, one might think of all emotions as the narrowing of the scope and focus of a mood." This means that his remarks about moods can be interpreted as applying to emotions, even if one wishes to distinguish between them. According to Heidegger, there is no such thing as a subject-object split, and thinking in those terms obscures our understanding of most issues about ourselves and the world. *Dasein* (his term of choice to avoid the undesired connotations of the term 'subject') is being-in-the-world, and being-in-the-world is a unitary phenomenon. Through our moods we are "tuned" to the world, open to it. We are always in a mood; this is the way in which we experience the world. There is no such thing as mood-less or affectless experiencing or perceiving. These ideas resonate strongly with claims by philosophers such as Richard Wollheim (1999) or Peter Goldie (2000; 2012)—by no means Heideggerians— that emotions "color" our experience, and with perceptual theorists' talk about emotions as ways of "seeing as." It should be clear, however, that for Heidegger there is no experience

whatsoever without such coloring: affectivity, *Befindlichkeit*, is one of the constituents of being-in-the-world. And in Heidegger's account, moods disclose things about the world, but also about Dasein itself. That is why anxiety or guilt are seen as ontological, as disclosing fundamental structures of our being, and why later on Sartre will argue that shame discloses the basic structure of intersubjectivity.

For his part, Jean-Paul Sartre (2003) also stresses that emotions are intentional—they are about the world—and pre-reflective—they are an awareness of the world, not an awareness of a bodily change in the subject of experience. But he goes further than this and stresses the active side of emotions: they are "motions," not exclusively passive "passions," as the Latin etymology of the latter word suggests. For Sartre, emotions are "magical transformations of the world": "in emotion, it is the body which, directed by consciousness, changes its relations with the world in order that the world may change its qualities" (Sartre 2003, 193). Roughly summarized, when we cannot change the world through ordinary intervention in it, we can "only act upon our self," change our experience of it through emotion. This is why Sartre suggests that when danger is imminent and inevitable, we faint in fear and thus make the threat disappear from our consciousness (Sartre 2003, 194). Even though the transformation happens in the subject of experience, the emotion is still directed at the world, the way in which she experiences it changes, but the focus is still outside (except for self-conscious emotions, of course). Emotion is passive only in the sense that it is undergone, it disturbs the body, and we typically cannot choose *deliberately* when the disturbance begins or ends. But for Sartre it is a purposeful strategy that we use for our own ends. Lastly, Merleau-Ponty, who did not devote much attention to emotion, did however emphasize that the body is the *subject* of emotion, and when emotion is culturally shaped and modified, the embodied experience of it is altered too (see Solomon 2006a, 419).

At this point, I would like to go back to Griffiths (2013) and his split between naturalists and non-naturalists about emotion. In his famous *What Emotions Really Are* (Griffiths 1997) he argues that 'emotion' is not a natural kind: it is not a homogeneous category that can be found in nature and studied through scientific procedures. The vernacular term 'emotion' covers too many things: from quick and spontaneous reactions (jumping back when seeing a snake-looking thing in the ground) to highly cognitive judgments (feeling guilty because I told a lie to a friend who trusted me). From an experiential point of view, however, it could be argued that they exhibit a similar type of intentionality and track values in similar ways. In any case, Griffiths' position has been addressed and discussed widely, and this is not the place to go into details. Regardless of how successful his argument about natural kinds turns out to be for the study of emotion in the natural sciences, from his approach I would like to draw the idea that not all emotional phenomena are of the same nature. One should at least distinguish what Jeff Elison (2005) calls "affects" from what he calls "affective-cognitive hybrids,"

based mainly on the work of Griffiths (1997) and Ortony (1987). Affects would correspond to what Ekman et al (1983) have labelled "basic emotions" and Griffiths calls "affect programs." According to them, affects form the biological basis of emotion, and therefore they are not exclusively human. They form a natural kind (Elison 2005, 9), which is composed of a limited number of universal, innate, hard-wired, quick responses to specific stimuli. On the other hand, affective-cognitive hybrids correspond to what we typically think of as human emotions. They are not natural kinds in Griffiths' sense, and Elison describes them thus: "these psychological states are a blend of affect and higher cognitions ... they show wide variation between cultures, are unlimited in number, yet cluster around foci [that] are determined by biological constraints" (Elison 2005, 9). Here "biological constraints" refers to the existing affects, which introduce a kind of restriction on the cultural variations of emotion analogous to the restrictions imposed by the color receptors in our eyes to the classification and labelling of colors: they do not limit the number of possibilities, but they determine the foci and demarcate what is completely outside of our capabilities. Agnes Heller (2003, 1017) draws the distinction between affects and emotions in a similar way, where "emotions" are always "affective-cognitive hybrids":

> What are the common features of affects? As pure affects, they are always reactive. Kant uses the term "reflective": they are feelings that answer to something, that is, to a stimulus. One reacts or reflects on something that is immediately present. Whenever affects are triggered by something absent, be it a future expectation or a past memory, they are "impure." Affects are impure when cognitive elements such as assessment and interpretation of the situation inhere in the affect. In such cases, affects are transformed into emotions. In the case of emotions, there are no generically universal expressions, only idiosyncratic ones.

Emotions, then, would not be universal, but affects would. Therefore, arguably, the shared basic affective capabilities would form a basis for cross-cultural understanding of other persons, whatever the limitations to such an understanding might be (see Evans 2003, 7–12). One example of how this works is provided by Bernard William's (2008) investigation into Ancient Greek *aidos*, which is standardly translated into English as "shame," the word that Williams uses in his book to refer to both phenomena most of the time. According to Williams, despite the many differences that he seeks to highlight,[10] the translation does work because both emotions share an ample common ground: "if it were not so, the translation could not have delivered so much that is familiar to us from our acquaintance with what we call 'shame'" (Williams 2008, 88). Part of the reason for this could be that both affective-cognitive hybrids, *aidos* and shame, cluster around the same affective focus.

[10] And he is particularly interested in stressing how productive and illuminating differences can be, and how much we can learn from them, so he is not in the least interested in minimizing them.

However, as Dylan Evans (2003, 14–15) explains, these two categories, affect and affective-cognitive hybrid, should not be viewed as clear-cut and discrete, but as reference points in a continuous spectrum: innateness is a matter of degree. Taking Evan's example, in a human being, growing legs is more innate than learning a language, because growing legs only requires a normal genome, sufficient nutrition and the absence of maiming accidents. As well as all these conditions, learning a language further requires being consistently exposed to a group of humans who speak a language, so it would be less innate. Learning a particular language such as English is even less innate, because it further requires that the language in question be English. Similarly, some emotions would be more innate than others. If we recall Peter Goldie's (2000, 98–99) views mentioned above, he compares the mechanism of emotional development to the one proposed by Noam Chomsky for language acquisition. Our emotional capabilities would in this view be innate, but roughly unspecified: they get developed and specified by exposure to a particular culture.

Goldie (2012, 56–75) has later defended the view that human emotions— which in normally developed adult individuals would all involve a high degree of hybridization between affect and cognition— are better thought of as processes, not as mental states or events, although Goldie himself does not speak in these terms. The claim is basically that emotional experiences are not identical from beginning to end, but they change all the time, they unfold, and this dynamic process of unfolding, not any specific phase of it, *is* the emotion. Using grief as his model, he argues that an emotion is "a kind of process; more specifically, it is a complex pattern of activity and passivity, inner and outer, that unfolds over time, and the unfolding pattern over time is explanatorily prior to what is the case at any particular time" (Goldie 2012, 56). Later on, still focusing on the case of grief, which according to him can serve as a model for the other emotions, he unpacks the possible components that an emotion pattern may consist of:

> [It] includes characteristic thoughts, judgments, feelings, memories, imaginings, actions, expressive actions, habitual actions, and much else besides, unfolding over time, but none of which is essential at any particular time. It involves emotional dispositions as well as particular experiences, and there will be characteristic interactions between these. ... The pattern is understandable as grief because it follows a characteristic shape, although it will be individual and particular to the person, and will no doubt be significantly shaped by cultural as well as biological influences. (Goldie 2012, 62)

On this view, emotions are, in effect, always affective-cognitive hybrids, and no adult human emotion can be properly accounted for in terms of raw affect. This does not mean that all emotions have the exact same components and complexity, or that patterns are analogous. The components of the

unfolding pattern that Goldie posits can vary in number and cognitive complexity from one particular emotion to another: he does explicitly say that even brief emotional episodes, such as fear, are processes, but that does not imply that their cognitive components are so numerous or complex, nor so extended over time, as in the case of grief that he analyses.

I greatly sympathize with Goldie's views on emotion, but I would like to retain and highlight some other ideas that have appeared in this overview, mainly the idea that our primary awareness of the world is affective: *Befindlichkeit* is our way of being open and in touch with the world. Through interaction and enculturation, our basic affective life gets developed and specified. In my view, it is also important to retain a sense that emotions are bodily and embodied, while acknowledging that thoughts and beliefs impact on our embodied experience of the world. As Robert Solomon (2006a, 420) puts it, "an emotional experience is the experience of a fully embodied and active engagement with the world." The 'affect' category has been productive for empirical scientific studies, and it can be useful as a reference point for theory, but on its own it is insufficient to account for human emotions, particularly when one in interested in the experiential dimension, in motivation and meaning. My intuition would be that raw affect, unmixed with any other components, is seldom, if ever, found in adult human beings, but again, the notion will prove useful as a reference point to draw differences among emotions. Throughout this dissertation, I will use the term "emotion" in a broad sense and I will further specify when necessary.

WHAT IS SHAME?

There have been many attempts at studying and defining shame, in various disciplines: philosophy, psychology, sociology, and so on. According to Elison (2005), shame is an affect in the sense sketched a few pages ago: a hard-wired, innate response. More specifically, it would be the affect underlying a whole family of affective-cognitive hybrids, including embarrassment, humiliation and some types of guilt. I will go back to this, but not all accounts use or endorse that distinction. Let us for now say that shame is an emotion in the broad sense. Typical characterizations label it as a social emotion, a moral emotion, a self-conscious emotion, or an emotion of self-assessment. Those different labels can be seen as related, and to a certain extent they can be articulated in a coherent picture, but the aspects they focus on have also been contrasted and opposed to each other. In the following sections, I discuss the main features that have been emphasized as crucial to shame, which mostly correspond to three of the foregoing labels: self-conscious emotion, social emotion, and emotion of self-assessment. The issue of

the ethical value of shame will be discussed at length in chapters 2, 4 and 5, and it always appears as a function of one or several of the other aspects, so I do not deal with it independently here. In my discussion of these sets of issues, I will typically employ the strategy of comparing shame to other closely related emotions, in order to refine our understanding of the phenomena at play. This exercise will prove to be very illuminating, not least because some of the main definitional labels have been arrived at through attempts at distinguishing clearly between shame and other emotions.

First of all, let us take an overview of the features that researchers have highlighted as characteristic of shame. Its phenomenology is marked by a feeling of exposure, inferiority and vulnerability. Typical bodily manifestations include blushing, averting the gaze, adopting a collapsed bodily position and so on: in shame, one feels smaller or wishes to become smaller and hide from view. In his conceptual genealogy, Bernard Williams (2008, 73) traced the original experience associated with shame in the Western tradition to that of being seen in the wrong circumstances by the wrong people, and more precisely, leaving the naked body exposed to the gaze of others. Therefore, the immediate reaction it triggers is that of covering oneself, hiding or escaping. The key example comes from one of the foundational myths of Western culture, where shame is discovered precisely in this way. When Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit, at which point "the eyes of them both were opened, they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."[11] The first effect of sin in Adam and Eve, what makes them realize the meaning of what they have done, is shame: their nakedness, their bodies become shameful, unfit to be exposed to each other's gaze, let alone God's. Starting from this paradigm of nakedness, shame would extend to other situations where we feel diminished in the eyes of another or simply exposed to her judgment, such as when a teenager is ashamed of being seen with his parents by his peers.

In developmental psychology, the appearance of full-blown shame is taken to be a manifestation of fully developed human self-consciousness, of a stage in which the child is already able to see herself from an external point of view: what Rochat (2009, 61) calls "self-co-consciousness" or "co-consciousness," and Reddy (2008, 147–49) calls "self-other-consciousness," to distinguish it from a more basic form of self-consciousness, where one is simply aware of oneself as distinct from the environment. This implies that shame is developmentally tied to the ability to be aware of the gazes of others upon us. A controversial question is how tied does shame stay to these gazes in adult life, how essential they are. From an evolutionary perspective (see Maibom 2010; Elison 2005, 17–18), shame can be taken to descend from a proto-emotion in non-human animals that live in hierarchical social

[11] Genesis 3, 7-8 (King James Version). See David Velleman's (2001) interesting discussion of this passage. I won't go into an analysis of Genesis here, but in my view it is no coincidence that the birth of conscience in the Bible is linked to shame.

structures, where assuming and displaying inferiority can serve as a mechanism of appeasement and social cohesion when confronting a hierarchical superior. This mechanism would have gained complexity and depth in human groups, which are organized in more horizontal and collaborative ways that increase the importance of peers' favorable opinions, and thus it would have developed into the human emotion of shame. These structures can help us see why in shame we feel exposed, faulty, vulnerable and inferior, and we feel the urge to disappear, to flee from the situation, away from vulnerability and danger. The two stories I sketched, the developmental one and the evolutionary one, could also be told about embarrassment, and some would say that they apply to embarrassment more than shame. In fact, my interpretation would be that both stories are operating with the notion of 'shame' as general term to refer to a family of emotions which includes, most prominently, embarrassment and humiliation, and arguably also guilt. I will trace the differences among them in more detail later on, as they become relevant to the discussion of the various aspects of shame, but let this be a mere reminder of the difficulty of pinning down exactly what we are referring to in discussions of these emotions.

In the relevant literature, shame is generally characterized as a distressing, often very painful, emotion that makes us feel faulty and unworthy, exposed, vulnerable and judged. A widespread way of cashing this out is to say that shame arises in connection to a negative self-evaluation, it has therefore been called an "emotion of self-assessment" (Taylor 1985). This negative self-assessment can be due both to active and passive aspects of selfhood: to actions and omissions of all kinds (telling a lie to a friend, failing to defend one's values in order to maintain status in a particular social group), to things that befall us (victims of abuse typically feel it), to character traits, physical features, social background and so on. In any case, the intentional object of the emotion is not the situation or action which gives rise to the shame episode, but the self of the person ashamed. Shame is reflexive, in the sense of directed back at myself[12], and that is why it has been labelled as a "self-conscious emotion." In shame, I focus on myself and see myself as small, faulty or inadequate. Some authors (e.g. H. B. Lewis 1971; Lynd 1999; Maibom 2010) claim that shame involves a global self-assessment, an assessment of the self as a whole, as opposed to guilt, which focuses on specific behavior: "I am faulty" as opposed to "I made a mistake." I will go into this in more detail further on.

Another key aspect that I touched on above is exposure: many authors claim that shame is a response to being exposed to the censoring gaze of a real, an imagined or an internalized audience (see e.g. Williams 2008; Sartre 1972; Maibom 2010). In this sense, it would be distinctively a "social emotion."

[12] Further on I address the possibility that this may not always be the case, that my shame can be directed at someone else. However, this is generally taken to be an exception, and that is why I have left it out of my first general characterisation.

The unpleasantness of exposure of a negative trait would explain why in shame we often experience a wish to hide and disappear from the view of others, which is mirrored in typical bodily manifestations, such as averting the gaze and adopting a collapsed bodily position. The blush would seem to contradict this dynamics, but it has been related to the social function of appeasement that evolutionary accounts attribute to shame and its ancestors (see Maibom 2010; Elison 2005, 17–18). However, the connection of shame and exposure to an actual external gaze or judgment is a rather controversial point, and as I hinted above, many other authors think that the audience is unnecessary: it is the ashamed self who performs an independent self-assessment according to her own values (Taylor 1985; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011). Whichever the answer to this controversy may be, this element of self-assessment explains why shame is often considered also as a moral emotion, in the sense of being a mechanism of self-censorship and self-punishment. One of the declared aims of this study is to investigate whether shame is actually moral, and in what sense, if the triggers are often unconnected to ethics.

This overview offers a very preliminary approach to the two groups of issues I will deal with in the rest of this chapter, which are central to many of the discussions on shame. First, I will focus on the issues connected to the self as the object of shame: whether shame focuses always on my own self or, on the contrary, it can focus on others, and whether it involves the "whole self" or not. Secondly, I will focus on the social character of shame: and specifically on the question whether it requires an audience. I will also introduce two other variants of the social claim: that shame implies an endorsement of the judgment that others pass on me, and that it implies the adoption of an external perspective on myself, but I will not develop these variants here, as I discuss them at length in chapters 2 and 3 respectively. From these discussions, a preliminary picture of the kind of selfhood that is at stake in shame will emerge: one that is embodied, situated and affected by others in a central way.

FOCUS ON THE SELF ASHAMED

According to most accounts, the intentional object of shame is the self of the person ashamed. Shame is an emotion that focuses on oneself, like pride, and not on the others or the world, like fear or love. That which elicits our shame is an occasion for it, or its cause, but not its object: I feel ashamed *of* myself *because* I lied to my friend, or *because of* my appearance, or multiple other possible things, but always *of myself* (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 83). The occasion gives rise to the distinctive anxiety of shame precisely because I perceive it as reflecting back upon me. As Hume (1978b, 286) remarked, if

the phenomenon is not intentionally directed at myself, I may perhaps feel other unpleasant emotions, but not shame. A related claim is that shame is globalizing, it focuses on the whole or the global self, and not on some aspect of it. These characterizations point towards an interesting link between shame and self-conscious individuation, which I will be dealing with further on. The claim that shame focuses on the "whole self" is the touchstone of most attempts to differentiate it clearly from guilt. According to this differentiation, guilt focuses on behavior, on what I did, while shame focuses on myself, on who I am. In that sense, guilt isolates self from behavior and focuses only on the second aspect, while shame globalizes, focuses on the self as a whole. "I did something bad" would be the assessment of guilt. "I am bad"[13] would be the assessment of shame (see H. B. Lewis 1971).

Several kinds of questions can be raised at this point. The first, most obvious one is: is it right to assume that the object of this emotion is always the ashamed self? Can shame not focus on someone else? Can I not feel ashamed in a situation where someone else is doing something shameful? Second, what is the nature of the link between the occasion and my own self, so that I should feel ashamed of myself? How does it "reflect back upon me"? And third, what does "self" mean in this context? What is it about me that I feel ashamed of? Without further explanation, it is highly unclear (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 84–85) why a focus on self, as opposed to behavior, has to be necessarily globalizing: what does "whole self" mean? Is it not conceivable that there are different aspects of selfhood or that one has different identities, which need not be affected simultaneously by the negative assessment of shame? The way I see them, all these questions come down to the third, most complex one, about the self of shame. This last question actually overarches into issues of sociality, as I indicated above, and it underlies the whole of my discussion of shame in this chapter, including the section on the social aspects of shame.

Let me say briefly what I understand by "self" here. This understanding has been greatly shaped by some ideas of Dan Zahavi's (2005). First of all, even if language use may push me to talk this way at some points, I would like to say that I understand self not as a thing or a static object, or even as an individual. I understand selfhood as the various processes through which the individual discriminates between itself and other beings in the world, even at the most basic level, between itself and the environment. At this very basic level, all organisms possess a zero degree of selfhood. A slightly higher degree would be what Zahavi (2005) has called the "minimal self," which amounts to the first-personal givenness of experience, the fact that all experiences are given to me differently than to others. In this sense, all beings capable of experience possess selfhood in the minimal degree, and they also have

[13] This should not make us forget that shame can arise about failures that are unconnected to ethics: my appearance, my skills to perform certain tasks, my education and family background, and so on.

subjectivity: they are subjects of experience. This minimal degree of selfhood is not enough for shame, as shame requires intersubjectivity and a certain amount of self-reflexivity, which are not part of minimal selfhood. But once this sine-qua-non is given, there are many shapes selfhood can take. In a famous and fascinating paper, Ulric Neisser (1988) offers descriptions of five different kinds of "selves": the ecological self, the interpersonal self, the extended self, the private self and the conceptual self or self-concept. While I am not certain about delimiting the number and characteristics with such precision as to call them separate kinds, I think he was definitely right in highlighting that selfhood comes about through various different processes and has many different dimensions, that self-experience and self-knowledge are not unitary or homogenous, but rather come in many different forms. One of the main issues I will be studying through this dissertation is precisely the kind of selfhood that is at stake in shame, the kind of self-experience or self-consciousness that shows up when we are ashamed. In the remainder of this chapter, I take in turn all the questions I raised in the previous paragraph. Exploring the answers will bring to light further aspects of the self of shame.

Can the object of shame be someone else?

First, let us look at the object of shame. Is it always the ashamed self or can it focus on someone else? Max Scheler, in his phenomenological analysis of this emotion, claims that shame is not necessarily directed at the subject who is feeling ashamed, i.e., it is not necessarily self-conscious. In his view, shame is about "the individual self in general" (Scheler 1957, 81),[14] not specifically about the ashamed self, and therefore we can feel genuine shame for other people in a non-vicarious way. Let me unpack this statement. Scheler writes:

> In having referred to subjective shame as a feeling of individual self-protection I did not mean to imply that shame must always relate to one's own individual self. The fact is that we can ourselves be ashamed "before" somebody else or before ourselves, as we can feel shame *"for" someone else*. In the latter case shame and what it is about refers to other persons present. (Scheler 1987, 18)

[14] Scheler (1957) and Scheler (1987) are two editions of the same work. The 1957 edition corresponds to the text in the original German, *Über Scham und Schamgefühl*, that can be found in Scheler's collected works, in the first volume of his *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*. The 1987 edition corresponds to the only existing English translation of this text—the only one I have been able to locate at least—by Manfred Frings. I have a few quarrels with this translation (the main one being that it sometimes omits certain words from the German unjustifiedly, in my opinion), and that is why I sometimes refer to the German edition, offering my own translations of the passages quoted, or a modified version of Frings. When this is the case, I indicate it in the footnotes. In my modifications I have been guided by the very faithful and precise Spanish translation by Íngrid Vendrell Ferran (Scheler 2004).

One qualification should be made here, because unfortunately the English translation skips certain words, which the translator presumably takes to be implicit in the meaning of the sentence, but which I deem important to make explicit here. In the passage quoted, Scheler distinguishes three varieties of shame: shame about myself before another, shame about myself before myself[15], and shame for (or about) someone else. What the English translation does not reflect is Scheler's explicit claim that all these varieties of shame are equally primordial, "genau so ursprünglich"[16]. According to him, none of them has priority over or grounds the others, so it is not the case that shame is primarily about myself, and other-directed shame must be explained by reference to it, as an exception or a special case, as an instance of what I will call "exposure by proxy." Rather, according to Scheler, shame must be analyzed as a phenomenon that does not essentially contain a reference to my own self in particular, but to *a* human self in general. A little further on, Scheler continues:

> Indeed this "being-ashamed-for-someone-else" can be, as well as shame I feel "for him," also shame I feel not in regard to me or a third person, but in regard to this very person himself (analogously to "being-ashamed-of-oneself"), as is well expressed when we say, "I feel shame deep within your soul." Shame is a feeling, therefore, of guilt for an *individual self in general*. It is not necessarily for *my* individual self but can be related to any individual self, regardless of where it might be given, in me or in another. This shows that shame is not, like sorrow and sadness, something attached to an ego. One cannot be "shameful" in the same way that one is sorrowful and sad and perchance partake sympathetically in these feelings with another. The basic phenomenon is here "to be ashamed" which is always *about something* and refers to a

[15] I will comment on the differences between these two possibilities in the next section, where I deal with the issue of the role of the audience in shame. I have discussed this issue extensively elsewhere (Montes Sánchez 2013).

[16] I'm quoting the Manfred Frings 1987 English translation (see note 8 above). Here is Scheler's German for the whole passage I am discussing in these pages: „Wenn ich die subjektive Scham eine Art der Selbstgefühle, und zwar ein individuelles Selbstschutzgefühl nannte, so war damit keineswegs gesagt, daß sie darum immer nur auf das individuelle Selbst des Sichschämenden bezogen sei. Denn so ursprünglich wir uns „vor" einem anderen oder vor uns selbst schämen können, genau so ursprünglich können wir uns *„für" einen anderen* schämen, z. B. uns selbst gegenüber, wobei das, worüber Scham gefühlt wird, sein Verhalten gegen Dritte oder uns selbst ist. … Ja, es kann dieses „Sich-für-einen-anderen-Schämen" auch ein Schämen sein, das ich nicht nur „führ ihn", sondern auch (analog wie bei dem „Sich-vor-sich-selbst-Schämen") im Hinblick nicht auf mich oder einen Dritten, sondern im Hinblick auf ihn selbst erlebe, wie es sehr scharf die Formel ausdrückt: „Ich schäme mich tief in deine eigene Seele hinein." Scham ist also ein Schuldgefühl für das *individuelle Selbst überhaupt*—nicht notwendig für *mein* individuelles Selbst, sondern für ein solches, wo immer es gegeben ist, an mir oder einem anderen. Eben dieses zeigt auch, dass Scham nicht wie Trauer, Wehmut eine am Ich haftende Gefühlsqualität ist. Man kann nicht „schamvoll" sein, so wie man wehmütig oder traurig ist und dann etwa an diesen Gefühlen anderer sympathisch ist. Vielmehr liegt das Grundphänomen im „Sichschämen" das immer ein Sichschämen *über etwas* ist und auf einen *Sachverhalt* bezogen, der es von sich aus und ganz unabhängig von unserem individuellen Ichzustand „fordert". Dieses „Sichschämen" ist eine emotionale Bewegung eigener Art, die noch kein *Sich*-schämen einschließt, d. h. keine erlebte Ichbezogenheit des Gefühls, geschweige schon die Tatsache, daß ich mich über mich schäme. Darum ist auch die Form des Auftretens der Scham das „Sichregen" ihrer, das „Überkommenwerden" oder „Überlaufenwerden" durch sie." (Scheler 1957, 81)

> *state of affairs* that solicits it independently of the ego and its states. This "shaming oneself" is an emotion unto itself which does not yet imply shame of one's *self*. There is no experienced relation to the ego, let alone one of my being ashamed "of" myself. For this reason shame "wells up," it "overcomes" and "befalls one." (Scheler 1987, 81)[17]

This is a rich and complex passage, but the point Scheler seems to be driving at can be somewhat clarified in light of his definition of shame. For him, "shame is a protective feeling of the individual and his or her value against the whole sphere of what is public and general" (Scheler 1987, 17). Shame for him is an essentially human emotion: neither an animal, which is only body and nature, nor a god, who is only spirit, can feel it, because shame arises as a result of the clashes between those two spheres of human existence. In his view, shame functions as a mechanism against the contamination of higher, positive self-values by lower ones; it protects the sphere of humanity and individuality. In Scheler's view, shame does not focus on my own ego, but on this wider sphere, which can be put at risk through myself or through any other self. Therefore shame for Scheler can focus on any individual self through whom these higher values are put at risk. This is why I can feel shame for others when there is no emotional contagion involved.

In her book *On Shame and the Search for Identity*, cultural anthropologist Helen Merrell Lynd (1999, 257) writes: "To confront shame makes possible the discovery of an integrity that is peculiarly one's own and of those characteristically human qualities that are at the same time most individualizing and most universal." Her views are close to Scheler's in important ways, despite the differences in their language. Lynd also thinks that shame is about that which makes us characteristically human, and she (Lynd 1999, chap. 1) fully embraces the possibility that one may feel shame for someone else: as the quote above shows, for her, the most individualizing human qualities are also the most universal, so they can perfectly be thrown into question through someone else in ways that make *me* feel ashamed. This is consistent with Scheler's view that shame is about "the individual self in general" (Scheler 1957, 81). I think that there is something right in the view that shame is linked to our humanity, and that there is a sense of commonality that allows us to feel shame for others, but the way Scheler talks about the object of shame being "the individual self in general" seems to me to blur important distinctions between self and others that are very present in some cases of seemingly other-directed shame, and it does not sit easily with the sense of self-individuation that accompanies shame. I will say more about this in a moment.

It is important to stress that the phenomenon that Scheler is analyzing here is non-vicarious, i.e., it is *not* caused by emotional contagion. The point is interesting precisely because there are cases in which

[17] The translation of this whole passage has been heavily modified by me.

the object of shame seems to be another person, and yet it is not the case that we have simply picked up her emotion by contagion, as it can happen when we enter a room where everybody is partying happily and soon we find ourselves in the same festive mood. Scheler exemplifies this by remarking on how listening to certain "dubious" stories told in a group of men doesn't cause him any awkward feelings, while listening to the very same stories in the presence of a young woman makes him feel shame (*Scham*)[18], even if the woman herself doesn't show any signs of shame, and thus emotional contagion is ruled out. This example might be a bit old-fashioned and informed by patriarchal prejudices about gender roles, but its validity is not affected by a criticism of the specific social standards at play. The situation is perfectly intelligible, and the phenomenal structure of Scheler's non-vicarious other-directed *Scham* can still clearly be seen in a setting that eliminates the patriarchal bias. Consider the difference between listening to a story from someone's intimate life told in a small group of close friends, where the context feels as appropriate to this kind of sharing, versus listening to the same story being told in a classroom discussion (say, as illustration of a point) in front of the professor and a large group of students, where the disclosure feels as inappropriate and exhibitionistic. In the second situation, one might feel shame as a listener, even if nobody else gives signs of feeling it. In both Scheler's example and mine, there is something shameful about the position of the passive listener or witness, but I will come back to this.

These kinds of examples are clear instances of what in Spanish is called *vergüenza ajena*, an expression which literally means "shame that doesn't belong to me, but to someone else," and which refers to a feeling of shame about another person. So does the German *Fremdscham*. Or do they? Even if one is careful to rule out emotional contagion, as Scheler does, and stress that this phenomenon can perfectly be non-vicarious, a quick objection can be raised: these are not examples of shame, but of embarrassment. The two notions are not clearly distinguished in German, nor are they in Spanish,[19] which is why Scheler can offer his story as an example of *Scham*; but shame and embarrassment are different in important ways that aren't merely terminological, and that would make it easier for embarrassment to be felt when one is no more than a witness of the ridiculous or inappropriate situation. Embarrassment is shallower (it doesn't affect the self so deeply) and much more fleeting, it is always linked to public appearances and it always requires an audience. I will discuss these

[18] This is by no means the only possible translation, and in a few lines I'll refer to the problems associated with it.
[19] Rom Harré (1990, 186) interprets that this is the case because, according to him, the Spanish concept of personal dignity or respectability is such that it can be thrown into question both by embarrassing and by disgraceful failures: "In Spain, one might guess, embarrassment is not a separate category from shame, because, through *dignidad*, character is always 'on the line.'" This might be more or less true if we think of the Spain of Don Quixote, but many things have changed since then, and in any case the matter would require a detailed anthropological investigation that is out of the scope of my present study. It is useful to bear in mind, however, that "appearances" are often less superficial and more far-reaching that one may initially think.

differences, and the degree of separation between these two emotions, in more detail in the next section, where I deal with the social aspects of shame and the role of the audience in it. For now, suffice it to say that if we do accept this specification, Scheler's extension of the object of shame to other selves could be interpreted as a consequence of the lack of a usual vocabulary to distinguish between shame and embarrassment in German. This may be one possibility. However, I believe that Scheler is right in remarking that shame (and not just embarrassment) can be felt for others in a genuine, non-vicarious fashion, but in my view, in these cases shame's object is still the self of the person ashamed, who feels, so to speak, exposed by proxy (but genuinely exposed). Therefore, I disagree with Scheler that the object of my shame can be another self, wholly unconnected to me. I have to feel somehow involved and exposed to feel genuine shame. What this phenomenon calls into question is not that shame focuses on my own self, but rather the idea of an encapsulated, autarchic self with clear and stable self-generated boundaries and limits.

How may it then be possible to feel exposed in somebody else's exposure? Walsh (1970), for instance, claims that shame can arise by association, because one belongs to the same group (family, nation, profession, etc.) as the shameful subject: think about travelling abroad and seeing a group of your fellow citizens doing something outrageous. One of the most obvious cases, which is frequent among teenagers, at least in Western countries, is feeling ashamed of one's parents or one's family of origin. But adults can feel that too, of course, and literary examples of this are numerous. In Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet "blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation" (Austen 2006, 112) seeing the myriad of inappropriate ways in which her parents and younger sisters behaved at a particularly elegant ball, and it appeared to her "that had her family made an agreement to expose themselves as much as they could during the evening, it would have been impossible for them to play their parts with more spirit, or finer success" (Austen 2006, 114). The case of parents feeling ashamed of their children isn't rare either: take as an example the strictly catholic Lady Marchmain's feelings about her rebellious homosexual son, Sebastian Flyte, in *Brideshead Revisited* (Waugh 2000). Stanley Cavell thinks that in these cases I can experience genuine shame, but ultimately it would not really be shame about someone else:[20]

> ... shame is felt not only towards one's own actions and one's own being, but towards the actions and the being of those with whom one is identified —fathers, daughters, wives…, the beings whose self-revelations reveal oneself. Families, any objects of one's love and commitment, ought to be the places where shame is overcome (hence happy families are all alike); but they are also the places of its deepest manufacture ... (Cavell 1995, 286).

[20] And this is not called *vergüenza ajena* in Spanish either: one's own family is by no means *ajena*.

A crucial word here is "identified": *I* feel exposed by proxy. There is an intuitive sense in which intimate others (family, close friends, etc.) are, or at least reveal, a part of who I am. By this I do not mean to imply that this is the case always, for everybody and under all circumstances. All I mean is that most of us have intimate others with whom we can easily identify closely, in ways that make us feel ashamed *of ourselves* through their exposure. And there are also situations that can create ties of a more temporary nature, but still are capable of making one feel revealed in somebody else's self-revelation. Sharing a trait or simply a situation with someone might be enough: remember Scheler's example of the dubious story told in front of a young woman. It is plausible to interpret this as saying that, because he is a man in a group of men, and because he listens to the indecency and allows it to happen, he feels identified with the indecent group and revealed as such. Or imagine you were invited to a dinner party where an obnoxious guest keeps unwittingly offending the host by tactlessly bringing up a delicate topic, regardless of everybody's awkward reactions and attempts at changing the conversation.[21] This second example is slightly different, but for now let me just say that the role of the passive witness or the listener can in itself be shameful,[22] as I will explain below. I do not mean to imply that otherness is eliminated in all aspects, but simply that some aspects of self-identity can depend on others and be represented by them, so that their exposure exposes me.

In his analysis of pride and humility, Hume devised a structure that can help understand this.[23] He talks about a double relation of impressions and ideas (Hume 1978b, 286). The self would be an idea, about which we can feel the passion of humility (or shame). But in order for it to arise, there must be a second idea, what Hume calls a cause for shame. This can be a feature, an action, an object, anything that is closely connected to me: the crucial point is not what type of thing or event it is, but the fact that it is closely connected to me. "Closely" here means that there must be something about this object or situation that can have an impact on my sense of self. There has to be what Gabriele Taylor (1985, 28–32) calls a relationship of belonging, a relationship that allows for identification: for whatever reason, I have to perceive that my identity is at stake or affected in this situation. Or, to put it in the terms I will be favoring later on, something has to make me experience my presence to myself. Shame-inducing objects and situations will vary depending on culture, character, personal values and so on, but they will share this capacity of impacting my sense of self.

[21] I owe this example to Peter Goldie.
[22] Such is the assumption of Michael Morgan's (2008) whole take on shame, although the passiveness he talks about has implications of a much more serious moral import. I will say more about this in my last three chapters.
[23] Hume takes pride and humility to be the two opposite emotions, of positive and negative self-assessment, respectively. From his discussion it is clear that he uses both terms broadly, and that shame not only falls within the scope of what he calls humility, but also is the most natural current term for most of his examples of humility. Therefore, in what follows, I take his claims about humility to apply to shame.

According to Hume, the cause of these emotions of self-assessment has certain qualities that produce certain impressions on me: if such impressions are agreeable, I will feel proud; if disagreeable, I will feel humbled. So, because object and cause (self and occasion) are connected at the level of ideas, there is a parallel connection between the impressions produced by the cause and the emotion felt by the subject: unpleasant impressions will correspond to the unpleasant emotion of humility, and vice versa for pride. If any of those elements is missing, the emotion will not arise: a disagreeable object that is unrelated to me will not give rise to shame, and neither will an object that is connected to me but not disagreeable. According to that structure, someone else, who was connected to me in the way described above, could obviously be a cause of my shame, could leave me exposed in the relevant sense. In this structure, the flexible nature of the things, situations and so on, that can bear a relevant connection to oneself points again toward a crucial issue: that the kind of selfhood at stake in shame is not an encapsulated, self-sufficient self with clear boundaries or delimitations.

All the views I have been examining until now explain other-directed shame by recourse to the existence of a common ground that the subject shares and identifies with, so that the other's shame involves her. Strictly speaking, the other would not be other: shame would be about shared values, qualities, ideals and so on that affect my sense of who I am and are thrown into question through the other. Shame would still be intentionally directed at one's own self through the other. One could argue, however, that the phenomenon "being ashamed of someone else" is equivocal: it does not refer to a painful awareness of a self put on the spot, be it mine or, as Scheler wants, someone else's. It rather refers to an aversive reaction (which also implies an accusation) because someone else has brought discredit or disgrace upon us. Scheler (1987, 19) remarks in a footnote: "There is equivocation in "shaming," because it refers both to wellings of shame and to wellings of sympathetic feelings of honor, as in the case where one has been made ashamed by someone else (= to be brought discredit)." The expression "I'm ashamed of you!" is more often than not an expression of moral condemnation, implying that the other's immorality wounds one's own moral feelings or affects one's social standing by association, rather than an expression of a genuine shame reaction on the speaker's part.

That is also typical of the phenomenon that in Spanish is called *vergüenza ajena*, and in German *Fremdscham*, which can be seen as a special sort of preventive shame, *pudor* or modesty, through which I isolate myself from the shameful feature or situation and reassure myself of my superiority. This type of "other-directed shame" involves a strong component of distance and condemnation from a third person perspective, and a certain feeling of superiority: I never lose sight of the fact that I am not the shameful subject. Compassion and identification are not a part of *vergüenza ajena*: one feels it when somebody does something disgraceful without the smallest hint of a sense of shame; for example, when witnessing the shameless behavior of some participants in reality shows. This could well be

what is going on in Scheler's example of the dubious comment made in front of a young woman. It certainly seems to be a possible reading of the case reported by Boris Cyrulnik (2010, 29–30) of a Polish Jew who survived the Warsaw ghetto, and many years later, in a trip to Israel, felt ashamed of the treatment Palestinians received there, because it reminded him of Warsaw. Cyrulnik claims that this man actually felt proud of his moral shame, which showed he was not a criminal, because he felt ashamed of the possibility of being associated with those who were abusing others.

The emotional reaction to these cases does not differ so greatly from being shocked or horrified by the impudence or shamelessness of somebody. It resembles moral indignation, and so a normative assessment: "you should be ashamed of yourself" is to say that "the fear of shame should prevent you from behaving this way." However, "I am ashamed of you" is not the same as "shame on you!" The distance cannot be such that it disconnects me from the person who is in the shameful situation; I need some kind of common ground that makes it possible to establish some association between myself and the shameful subject so that my "sympathetic feelings of honor" can be stirred. There needs to be some kind of connection for someone to be able to bring disgrace upon myself. And the implication I wish to highlight here is that sometimes the mere fact of being passively present before some situations can feel disgraceful. If *Fremdscham* makes us avert our eyes and avoid the other, it is not because we want to avoid being exposed to his gaze, it is in order to fill in for his reaction: he should hide, but he does not, so I refuse to look at him, I deny him my recognition, I sever my social relationship with him, because such a relationship is shameful. Because recognition is reciprocal—recognizing someone entails allowing her to recognize me (see Cavell 1995, 277)—this kind of shame could in a sense be construed as directed at my own self: I refuse to be seen by someone I despise, I am ashamed of being thus associated with such a shameless person.[24] If this is the case, it could be argued that this type of shame is not entirely other-directed, or at least that, in the moment of shame, I recognize a commonality that I wish to reject, as Lynd's (1999) account suggests. The role of the witness can be shameful: a witness is somehow involved, not a detached observer.[25] And this involvement in the capacity of witness can be a cause of shame. Scheler's example can be read this way: by listening passively to the dubious story, he on some level feels like an accomplice of the indecency. This could also be the case of the accidental spectator of a reality show who turns off the TV in shame, or of the case of the Polish Jew in Palestine reported by Cyrulnik. In his novel *Waiting for the Barbarians*, J. M. Coetzee has a poignant reflection on how merely witnessing something can turn one into an accomplice, as shown in the reflections of the main character: "When some men suffer unjustly ... it is

[24] For more on shame and recognition and Cavell's account of the connection between them, see chapter 3.
[25] I go into this in more detail in chapters 3 and 4, particularly when discussing Cavell's (1995) reading of *King Lear* in terms of shame and his remarks on what we can learn as audiences of tragedy, as well as in my analysis of J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace*.

the fate of those who witness their suffering to suffer the shame of it" (Coetzee 2004, 139). The issue of shame as a moral reaction to suffering or witnessing atrocities is immensely complex, and I will not go further into it here, but I will come back to it in chapters 3 and 4.

For all the aforementioned reasons, I don't believe that being ashamed of someone else, *vergüenza ajena* and *Fremdscham,* pose a severe challenge to the idea that shame is about my own self: on the one hand, because in some situations intimate others have such an influence who I am that I identify with them to the point of feeling exposed by proxy; on the other hand, because other-directed shame is either ultimately directed at myself (I am ashamed of being associated with a shameless person), or it is not proper shame, but a denunciation of its absence in someone else. The subtle interplay of partial identifications and disidentifications brings to light the tensions and interactions between the intimate and social aspects of shame. The self of shame, therefore, is a self that can feel revealed in others' self-revelations.

"Whole self"

Another standard claim that has been made about the object of shame, at least since Helen Block Lewis (1971), is that shame has a global focus on the self as a whole. How should we understand this claim? Lewis' emphasis on the globalizing character of shame stems partly from the comparison she draws with guilt and her way of differentiating them, which has become standard. The distinction between these two emotions, according to her influential account, would be based on the differentiation between self and behavior: shame focuses on the self, while guilt focuses on behavior. "I am bad" versus "I did something bad." In this sense, shame would be a globalizing indictment of the whole self, whereas guilt would be focalized on actions and omissions. This globalizing character would explain why shame is such a painful emotion, "despite its often very ''innocent'' content" (Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009, 344). A clear (and beautifully written) example of that kind of case can be found in Virginia Woolf's short story "The New Dress," written with her famous stream of consciousness technique, which richly depicts an episode of shame as experienced from the first-person perspective. This is the beginning:

> Mabel had her first serious suspicion that something was wrong as she took her cloak off and Mrs. Barnet, while handing her the mirror and touching the brushes and thus drawing her attention, perhaps rather markedly, to all the appliances for tidying and improving hair, complexion, clothes, which existed on the dressing table, confirmed the suspicion—that it

> was not right, not quite right, which growing stronger as she went upstairs and springing at her, with conviction as she greeted Clarissa Dalloway, she went straight to the far end of the room, to a shaded corner where a looking-glass hung and looked. No! It was not right. And at once the misery which she always tried to hide, the profound dissatisfaction—the sense she had had, ever since she was a child, of being inferior to other people—set upon her, relentlessly, remorselessly, with an intensity which she could not beat off, as she would when she woke at night at home, by reading Borrow or Scott; for oh these men, oh these women, all were thinking—"What's Mabel wearing? What a fright she looks! What a hideous new dress!"—their eyelids flickering as they came up and then their lids shutting rather tight. (Woolf 1973, 49)

The rest of the story goes on to describe in great detail Mabel's increasing shame, the suffocating feeling of inadequacy and inferiority that becomes a little more intense and unbearable with every look from another guest, with every glimpse of herself she catches in a mirror, until she almost flees the party, barely managing to thank the hostess and take her leave. Here, as happens to several participants in Karlsson and Sjöberg's (2009) phenomenological-psychological study, an occasion with an "innocent content" causes intense pain and a globalizing negative self-assessment: a slightly eccentric dress becomes for Mabel Waring the symbol of a generally faulty and inferior self. Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 84–85), however, resist the conclusion that the intense pain of shame comes from its affecting the "whole self" and raise an objection to this way of contrasting shame and guilt:

> Guilt turns out to involve the evaluation of an action or omission as an infraction of a norm, as forbidden. This, it appears to us, is a happy result: the contrasts between values and norms, on the one hand, and between self and behavior, on the other, are made for one another, since only actions or omissions are in accordance or in conflict with norms.
>
> The result of this same combination for shame, by contrast, means that shame takes the global self as its object and places an all-encompassing negative evaluation on it. This is clearly less illuminating than the result regarding guilt. Why? Because, while it may intuitively ring true, the notion of a "global self" remains quite mysterious and much too dramatic to account for many episodes of shame. Taken at face value, it might suggest that the self is a substance, all aspects of which are evaluated negatively in shame. Yet it is simply not true that most shame episodes are lived by the subject as encompassing each and every aspect of his identity.

The claim can indeed sound mysterious and dramatic: mysterious, because it is unclear why all aspects of the self should be affected by a situation which pertains only to one or to a few of them, and dramatic, because such a global involvement may only be understandable in extreme cases, such as those of victims of trauma or abuse. Perhaps those situations can understandably cause in the victim a feeling of global degradation, but why should missing your lunch date with your mother or having a slightly flirtatious exchange with a friend's partner lead to such a feeling?[26] The claim does then need some clarification, particularly because, taken literally and coupled with a particular interpretation of what the self at stake in shame amounts to,[27] it has led many authors, such as Tangney, to interpret shame in such a way that it seems to always be a disproportionate response to the eliciting occasion.[28] After all, one could think, traumatic shame is pathological, and Mabel Waring does strike the reader as clearly hypersensitive and a little neurotic. If we view all cases of shame as analogous to these, involving an unjustifiably globalizing indictment of the whole self, then we must conclude that shame is mostly destructive, as Tangney and Dearing do.

One could think, however, that this is not even what Tangney and Dearing really mean. The items that measure shame in their TOSCA-3 questionnaire rarely involve truly global statements of degradation, such as "I would feel small… like a rat," (see Tangney and Dearing 2004, 211). They are usually more focused, and refer to specific shortcomings, such as incompetence, inconsiderateness or cowardice. This type of considerations lead Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) to conclude, after a very careful and thorough analysis, that shame does not focus on the whole self, but concretely and specifically on those self-relevant values that are a stake in each particular situation. It does impact my sense of self in a very intense, but *focalized* way, not in a globalizing one. I feel incapable to live up to a standard I care to exemplify for a specific property or set of properties—this is serious and shocking enough—, but

[26] These examples are taken from Tangney and Dearing's TOSCA-3 questionnaire (Tangney and Dearing 2004, 207–208). The acronym corresponds to "Test Of Self-Conscious Affect," of which there are several versions. TOSCA-3 is supposed to measure the proneness of subjects to react to different proposed scenarios with shame, guilt, detachment, externalization or two different kinds of pride. The assumption, coming from their previous investigation on typical situations that elicit self-conscious affect, is that the exact same situations can cause shame or guilt in an individual, depending on various other factors (see Tangney and Dearing 2004, chap. 3).
[27] I am referring to views on "self" as a static concept that amounts to a nugget of more or less stable characteristics (the features that define an individual). This way of thinking about selfhood in terms of identity features is unsatisfactory and creates some problems for accounts of shame, which can better be deal with by employing a more dynamic concept of selfhood based on classic phenomenology (see Zahavi 2005; Zahavi 2012; León 2013), as I will explain later on.
[28] For some critical perspectives on the biases of the TOSCA questionnaire, see Ferguson and Stegge (1998) and Luyten, Fontaine and Corveleyn (2002). Luyten and colleagues have shown that the original TOSCA overwhelmingly represents cases of mild, adaptive guilt related to reparation, and maladaptive aspects of shame related to low self-esteem. Drawing on these findings, Giner-Sorolla, Piazza and Espinosa (2011, 446) "propose that TOSCA guilt measures the motivation to respond to one's own misdeeds with compensatory action, whereas TOSCA shame measures the tendency to experience intense emotions of guilt and shame from the appraisal of self-blame, and to a lesser extent the desire to withdraw from others."

not for *all* of them. In their view, their account preserves the focus on the self and makes sense of the acuteness of the emotion, but without the exaggerated implication that it must always affect the *whole* self.

There is however ample empirical evidence to support the claim that a feeling of global self-involvement is a distinctive feature of the experience of shame (see, for example, H. B. Lewis 1971, 30; Tangney 2005, 545; Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009, 352; M. Lewis 1995, 2, 34; M. Lewis 1998, 128), and as I explain below, there are developmental and evolutionary grounds that help explain why this is the case. But how to make sense of this if we accept the criticism levelled against the "whole self" view by Donna, Rodogno and Teroni? I would propose, endorsing Felipe León (2013), that the globalizing character of the phenomenon comes from the side of exposure, from the feeling of being singled out and put on the spot, not from the evaluative side. Perhaps upon reflection we do not *evaluate* that we are globally degraded, but in the moment of shame we seem to always *feel* completely exposed, and there are developmental and evolutionary grounds to explain why and how this kind of feeling should come about. Degradation and exposure are not the same thing,[29] of course, but in what follows my aim is to make sense of the holistic character of the phenomenon of shame. One can do this, I argue, by thinking about how we experience exposure, not by trying to make sense of an all-encompassing evaluation, since I agree with Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) that it is simply not true that all our self-relevant values are globally negatively evaluated in all instances of shame. The holistic character of shame comes from individuation and singling out. Let me explain in detail what I mean by this.

As for the developmental grounds that would illuminate the experience, the Spanish essayist Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio (2000) tells a story according to which children are essentially "docile," and their main need and wish is to belong, to be welcomed and accepted, first by their parents and their extended family, and subsequently by the successive social groups where they find themselves, ultimately by society at large. Shame in this picture is the aversive reaction to being rejected, ostracized, to not being loved. Many studies in developmental psychology support these ideas (see Rochat 2009). Regardless of what may be the case later in life, it is hardly controversial that the first manifestations of self-conscious emotions of the shame family in children are a result of their social interactions and appear in the presence of others (see Rochat 2009; Reddy 2008). Rochat emphasizes the importance of connection and affection for child development, and claims that separation anxiety is "the mother of all fears" (Rochat 2009, 21, 23–25). What Sánchez Ferlosio calls "docility," the need for belonging, is decidedly essential. Shame is a product of this need for connection and is one of the fundamental forms of separation anxiety, of the fear of being rejected by others without whom the

[29] I am grateful to Fabrice Teroni for pressing me to clarify this difference.

child cannot survive or flourish (see also Nussbaum 2006, 185). How does this support the idea that the "whole self" is affected in shame? Simply in the sense that separation and rejection are circumstances that affect the individual as a whole, regardless of the specific feature or situation that causes them.

Heidi Maibom's (2010) evolutionary account lends plausibility and explains the phenomenology of the whole-self-involvement in a similar way. As I said above, according to her, shame descends from a proto-emotion of appeasement. In non-human animals with simpler social structures, displaying inferiority in the face of an aggressive hierarchical superior is an effective mechanism to solve and prevent conflict. In human groups, which have a more complex, more horizontal and collaborative structure, where the good opinion of peers becomes more important, this proto-emotion would have gained complexity and would have become what we know as human shame (see also Elison 2005, 17–18). Again, acceptance and status within a group is something that impacts the individual as a whole, regardless of the concrete features that create or maintain such status.

One could rightly retort, however, that none of the above necessarily implies that all adult experiences of shame in contemporary Homo sapiens must be globalizing. Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 106) themselves acknowledge the fact that shame can occasionally be experienced in an holistic way, but they explain it in terms of the likelihood that some failings may concern several values or capacities at the same time, or that the negative assessment of one personal feature may spread to others by association. But does this sufficiently explain why shame is so often experienced as embracing the whole self? The developmental and evolutionary accounts would seem to suggest that, at least temporally, the holistic experience is prior to the more focalized one: shame is not in the first place focused and then spreads; rather, it starts as a holistic experience and gets refined and focalized through concepts. If we think about individual self-relevant traits, features, values, and so on, it is clear that shame is not typically experienced as indicating a shortcoming in each and every one of them. But neither the developmental nor the evolutionary stories limit the sense of self at stake in shame to self-relevant values and features. The sense in which the self is involved "as a whole" in these stories is not so much connected to a set of properties as it is to self-individuation: rejection and status affect the individual in its entirety, not insofar as it bears properties x, y and z, or aspires to them, but insofar as it is *this singular* one. Properties do not singularize us, they do not allow us to discriminate between two identical individuals, but shame has to do with this feeling of being singled out. And this type of self-individuation is not something that can affect one partially, or rather, the singling out can and usually does happen because of a property, but it implicates the individual as a whole. We can get a bit clearer about this by bringing the body into the picture.

If we think of nakedness, as Williams (2008, 73) does, as one of the paradigmatic occasions for shame, these two elements are obvious: when I am ashamed to be seen naked, I am ashamed because I am entirely exposed as *this* particular body. All I seem to be in this particular instance of shame is this naked, indecent, vulnerable body that reveals me. But Scheler (1957, 75) explains that this feeling of being entirely exposed qua body is not confined to societies that classify nakedness as indecent: being clothed is a cause of equally intense shame in cultures that consider wearing clothes as indecent, because in that context covering one's body singles it out, attracts attention to it and therefore causes the same feeling of being wholly exposed, of being individuated as *this* particular body. For this very same reason, the feeling of total exposure is not confined to cases of complete nakedness: just revealing a part of one's body that should not be seen is enough to single one out and reveal one in this way. Both Scheler (1957, 79) and Williams (2008, 220–21), who comments on a famous example of Scheler's, agree that the shame does not lie in the nakedness itself, but in the gaze of the other, and in the vulnerability of our status and identity to such a gaze. They talk about a bashful woman posing as painter's model, who does not feel ashamed to be naked in front of him while he is looking at her as an aesthetic object, but starts feeling shame when she perceives sexual desire in his gaze. It is that gaze, and her powerlessness to control or prevent it, that undresses her. Nakedness is not shameful (when it is) because it uncovers a material thing, a specific body part, but because it uncovers a condition. Lévinas (2003, 36), in his early essay *On escape*,[30] writes: "Nakedness is shameful when it is *the sheer visibility of our being*, of its ultimate intimacy. And the nakedness of our body is not that of a material thing, antithesis of spirit, but the nakedness of our total being in all its fullness and solidity…." It is clear that "our total being in all its fullness and solidity" in Lévinas' sense goes beyond the thing "body," but it does not amount either to a set of self-relevant values, which is the way in which Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni conceive of the self of shame. How, then, to interpret these claims? What is being revealed here?

Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni are right in remarking that, if one conceives the self of shame the way they do, it is not possible to make much sense of the claims that shame involves the "whole self." But there is a different, more illuminating way of cashing out the holistic character of the experience, which explains it in terms of its subjective structure and meaning. In his paper on the topic, Felipe León (2013) makes a compelling case to show that this idea ceases to be mysterious if we abandon the property-based account of the self of shame that Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni operate with, and we substitute it with a structure-based account of selfhood that draws on classic Husserlian phenomenology. According to León (2013, 207), "…the intentional object of typical shame experiences is not the self *qua* bearer of a property or a set of properties but the self *qua* someone intrinsically

[30] For more on this, see chapter 3.

exposable to the others." The self of shame should not be viewed as a set of self-relevant values, but as an irreducible, individual, embodied and situated consciousness. As Sartre (1972) explains,[31] there is a whole dimension of my being that is revealed to me in shame. In shame, I suddenly shift from a purely first-person perspective, where I'm focused on the world, on the objects of my experience, and where I apprehend myself pre-reflectively as the consciousness that is doing the perceiving, to a perspective where I apprehend myself as the object of somebody else's experience. I therefore become aware that I have an outside that can be seen by others and that is an integral part of me, but escapes my control entirely. León (2013, 208) writes: "… it is *my* embodied and *my* situated existence that are cogently experienced in shame, but as accessible from a perspective which is out of my control, which is external to me." What is revealed here is a structure, not a feature. The holistic character of the shame experience does not come from a global self-evaluation, but from the self-individuation that happens in my awareness that I am or can be perceived by others. Exposure is always global in the sense in which self-individuation is: "to feel one's own individuation in shame experiences does not amount to consider oneself as a substance integrally evaluated, but rather to experience in intersubjective contexts the irreducibility of one's own particular subjective situation in the world" (León 2013, 211). This is what the holistic character of shame amounts to.

This is why, in the moment of shame, when I am unexpectedly overcome by it and I am undergoing the emotional episode, I can experience it as evaluatively global too. I see myself under that description only. I am *this* one: "the woman with adulterous desires," "the eccentric woman in the old-fashioned yellow dress," "the listener of indecent stories," "the fellow-citizen of those fools" and so on. It is not that the indictment expands to all aspects of myself, to all my features and values, but rather that for a moment the focus narrows down and I am defined as nothing but that. I am individuated under that description: I am not globally degraded in all my features; I am simply reduced to the small portion that is in focus. In their phenomenological-psychological study, Karlsson and Sjöberg describe the temporality of shame as the feeling of a "frozen now," an experience that is "cut out of the ordinary temporal flow of life" (Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009, 351) and offers no way out into the future. I am experientially reduced to the unwanted identity (Ferguson, Eyre, and Ashbaker 2000) that appears in the moment when shame overcomes me, and I seem unable to move beyond it, as if all other possibilities were foreclosed in that instant. Imagine that, as a teacher, I were to go into a classroom and deliver a terribly poor lecture. Afterwards, I would feel shame. However, I would most likely assess that I was a bad teacher, not that I was a bad person or a bad human being. Shame would attach to my persona, to my role or to use Korsgaard's (1996) notion, to my practical identity as a teacher.[32]

[31] A much more in-depth commentary of Sartre's account of shame can be found in chapter 3.
[32] Thanks to Giovanni de Grandis for the example and the distinction.

The self-individuating character of shame, with its narrowing of focus and its frozen nowness, would still make me experience it as globalizing, while I retain the capacity to assess that it is myself-as-a-teacher that I am ashamed of, not myself-as-a-philosopher, nor myself-as-a-daughter, nor myself-as-a-romantic-partner, nor myself-as-a-human-being. In the moment of shame, however, all those other identities recede into the background and I get singled out as the bad teacher. That is all that is in focus while I'm ashamed. On further reflection, those other aspects of myself will probably be untainted (or not, depending of many factors, among them my personality), but in the frozen now of shame, it is as if they didn't exist, as if they had vanished or at least receded to an undistinguishable background, and all that remained was the shameful aspect on focus.

Now, as far as the self-assessment of my features is concerned, it is also possible for such an individuating reduction to expand by contagion and be experienced as an all-encompassing indictment, as if the inadequacy in one aspect would contaminate other aspects of myself, or would indicate a more generalized inadequacy. This extension of a focalized inadequacy to other features is exactly what happened to poor Mabel Waring, who saw in her new dress a symbol of her inferiority to other people in very general terms. This is why shame can be experienced as globalizing and holistic, as affecting the "whole self," in an evaluative sense too, through evaluative contagion as Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni argue, and as exemplified by Mabel Waring. But they are right in arguing that his is not so in all cases. There are countless instances of shame where it is not an all-encompassing negative evaluation, but yet it is a globalizing experience, in the sense of singling one out. Again, what we experience in shame is a reduction of focus: I am *this* one. Not the complex person of a long-lived, intimate acquaintance, but the unflattering snapshot of a bad moment: "the eccentric," "the adulteress," "the vulgar man."

SOCIALITY AND SELF-ASSESSMENT

In the previous discussions, two main dimensions—actually, for many, *the* two main dimensions of shame—have revealed themselves as central: the focus on the ashamed self, the fact that shame implies a certain way of being aware of myself; and exposure, the awareness that I am the kind of being that can be perceived (and judged) from the outside. As was clear in the discussion of Hume, this experience needs to be negatively valenced for it to be shame, as those two elements are also present in pride, which has a positive feel to it. So it seems that the evaluative element is essential too, and most accounts agree that what is negatively evaluated when I feel shame is myself. For instance,

Gabriele Taylor (1985, 57) claims that one of the two essential elements of shame is "the self-directed adverse judgment of the person feeling shame: she feels herself degraded, not the sort of person she believed, assumed or hoped she was or anyway should be." Indeed, Taylor is the philosopher who first labelled shame as an "emotion of self-assessment." One could also think that exposure itself has a negative valence, that we do not need a further element to give us that. It is true that there are forms of positive exposure to others, such as love or pride, but it can make sense to think them as grounded in a basic vulnerability or insufficiency. I will come back to this issue in chapter 3.

The second element that Taylor identifies as crucial for shame is a more concrete version of what I have referred to as "exposure": an audience (Taylor 1985, 57). The two elements would be connected in that the self-assessment would be triggered by the disapproving gaze of the audience. This is the way in which Taylor, and countless other authors, cash out the claim that shame is a social emotion. But is this the only interpretation around? A much more modest way of interpreting the characterization of shame as social would be to say that we learn the codes and standards of what is shameful from other people, that those standards are encoded in culture, or that shame, as a social emotion, serves social functions. The problem with this interpretation, as social psychologists Hareli and Parkinson (2008) and philosophers Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) explain, is that these claims are obviously true, but they do not tell us anything especially interesting about shame in particular, or even social emotions in general. For example, they are far too broad to distinguish shame and the like from other, non-social, emotions, because all human emotions are partially governed and shaped by cultural codes and most of them serve social functions (see Hareli and Parkinson 2008, 132–37; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, chap. 1). If all the above factors do not distinguish social emotions from non-social ones, then what does? Hareli and Parkinson (2008, 131) write:

> ... social emotions are social in a different way to other emotions. Shame, embarrassment, and jealousy are social emotions because they necessarily depend on other people's thoughts, feelings or actions, as experienced, recalled, anticipated or imagined at first hand, or instantiated in more generalized consideration of social norms or conventions. Each of these emotions derives its defining quality from an intrinsic relation to social concerns: at the conceptual level, it would not count as a proper instance of the emotion category in question, and at the empirical level it would not have its distinctive relational quality, unless the relevant social concern was in play.
>
> Social concerns are best conceived as matters that people care about because of their social importance (e.g., status, power and attachment). They define people's place and situation vis-

> à-vis different social entities such as social norms, other people, groups, teams or organizations.

In other words, according to them, social emotions entail a reference to what other people (would) think or do, and they are always informed by distinctively social values, such as status and reputation. Is this the case of shame? Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni (2011) think that the audience is not always necessary for shame and that non-social concerns can also be a crucial part of it—shame, therefore, would not always be social according to the above definition of "social emotion" by Hareli and Parkinson. But there are other ways to cash out what it means for shame to be a social emotion. In their recent book, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 32–37) identify three strong and controversial strands of this claim, which map only partially onto the above definition by Hareli and Parkinson: (i) shame as heteronomous, i.e.,, informed by values that do not belong to the ashamed subject; (ii) shame as involving "an evaluation in terms of one's appearance vis-à-vis an audience" (34); (iii) shame as the result of adopting an external perspective on ourselves. They defend instead the thesis that shame is (i) about my own values, (ii) about what I am and not exclusively about what I appear to be (even though they recognize that appearances are often an important part of what I am, but not the only one, and not the only one that can cause shame), and (iii) that in shame I am my own judge and need not adopt anybody else's perspective. I find much to agree with in their criticisms, although I dispute their positive account of shame, which as I showed in the previous section, is based on a problematic account of the kind of selfhood at stake in this emotion. But let us have a closer look at the issue, and I will come back to my disagreement with them.

The Hareli and Parkinson definition of social emotion, applied to shame, would fall squarely within the second strand of the social claim, because according to them social emotions require an audience. They further specify that the values at play are social in the sense that they concern status and reputation in a social group, but they claim nothing about value ownership or perspective shift. I will address in much more detail the issues of heteronomy in chapter 2 and perspective shift in chapter 3, so in this chapter I focus on the audience. This, in any case, is what, according to Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 24), most authors mean when they say that shame is a social emotion: that it requires an audience, which can be real, imaginary or internalized. The issue of heteronomy is partially entangled with it, and I will touch upon it briefly in this chapter, although, as I said, the main development comes in chapter 2. But first I would like to take a look at shame from a developmental perspective, because I believe it can help shed some light on some of these issues.

Shame in Development

In this section I do not aim at providing a comprehensive overview of the different accounts of the development of shame that developmental psychology has to offer, as that is a vast field in itself, where experiments, findings and their meanings are hotly debated. But I would like to highlight some insights mainly from the work of Vasudevi Reddy, who has been studying infants in interpersonal engagement for many years. Her innovative work is deeply informed by a critique of the philosophical assumptions underlying the mainstream view of how the understanding of others and the sense of self develop, and it can be very useful to shed light on the sociality of shame.

According to the most widespread view in developmental psychology, self-conscious emotions such as shame or pride only emerge in normally developing infants around the second year of life (see M. Lewis 1995 for a prominent example; Rochat 2009, 96–98 endorses this view; see Draghi-Lorenz, Reddy, and Costall 2001 for an extensive review of theorists and a powerful criticism of this position ; see also Reddy 2008, 144). This is so because in the cognitive-developmental view, self-conscious emotions are thought to depend on the possession of a concept of self. Empirical proof that this concept is in place is linked to the mirror self-recognition test, where an experimenter places a mark on the infant's face (a post-it, a colored tape, some rouge…) without the child noticing it, and then produces a mirror for the infant to see herself. If upon seeing her image in the mirror, the infant touches the mark or tries to remove it, this is taken to be evidence of an explicit self-concept that allows the child to reidentify herself in the mirror, understand that this is the way in which others see her, and manipulate that image. Typically infants start to pass this test consistently from the 18th month of age onwards, and from then on, supporters of the cognitive-developmental view start to talk about the onset of self-conscious emotions, such as embarrassment, pride, jealousy and shame (Rochat 2009, 96–98). But before that, these emotions are deemed to be absent, according to the cognitive-developmental view. Michael Lewis (1995), for example, even makes a further distinction between "self-conscious emotions," which in his view emerge in the second half of the second year of life, and "self-conscious evaluative emotions," which emerge one year later. The former, according to Lewis, are empathy, envy and what he calls non evaluative embarrassment, and they merely require the development of an "objective self," i.e., a self-representation and the capacity to see oneself from the perspective of an observer. The latter, "self-conscious evaluative emotions," are pride, guilt, shame, hubris and evaluative embarrassment, and they further require the capacity to compare oneself to internalized cultural standards, rules or goals. This is more cognitively demanding, and that is why it only comes later.

Now, Reddy, drawing on the work done by Carroll Izard and Colwyn Trevarthen, among others, argues that this view is false, and disputes the idea of pure emergence of capacities. She favors a take on developmental psychology where the infant's mind and abilities gradually become more and more complex, but nothing suddenly emerges or appears, every ability has basic precursors that can be observed already from the first weeks of life. Reddy's focus has been intersubjectivity and interpersonal understanding, and she is very critical of views that make everything rest on very complex cognitive and conceptual capacities. In the cognitive-developmental theories exemplified by Michael Lewis, interpersonal awareness arises out of the development of a concept of self, and requires the acquisition by the child of something like a "theory of mind" to interpret others. There is a dualistic model at play, where I am, so to speak, locked inside my head, and I need to read or decipher others from a third-person perspective, with reference to a representation, be it a simulation, an analogy with my own mind, or a theory of mind. In such a view, infants before 18 months of age lack a concept of self and thus interpersonal awareness. Their relations to others are driven by instinct and something like a stimuli-response pattern of association. They explore and learn to manipulate contingencies and regularities between their behavior and the satisfaction of their needs, but they don't understand other people as minded. Reddy (Reddy 2008; Draghi-Lorenz, Reddy, and Costall 2001) strongly opposes this view. She has repeatedly defended that interpersonal awareness is possible and happens from birth onwards, it simply gets richer and more complex. But in her view the cognitive-developmental picture misses a crucial element: the second-person perspective. From the very beginning, interaction gives the infant a very basic sense of self and other (the other person as qualitatively distinct from an object). This basic interpersonal awareness is what prepares the ground for a concept of self, not the other way around (Reddy 2008, 144).

Reddy's (2008) views are based on empirical findings that show that infants possess a wide range of interpersonal and communicative abilities long before there is any evidence of a self-concept, but she argues that those are under-documented and under-researched. Together with Draghi-Lorenz and Costall, she attributes this shortcoming to the conceptual prejudice that self, or a sense of self, is equivalent to "self-concept" and that understanding others as minded implies representation and interpretation (Draghi-Lorenz, Reddy, and Costall 2001, 272). In contrast, she conceives selfhood as a relation, as "a dialogic entity, existing only in relation and therefore knowable only as a relation" (Reddy 2008, 149). A self (and I agree with Zahavi 2005 that it is much better to talk about 'selfhood' instead) is not a thing that is defined by its features, as things are. Selfhood, as I argued in the section on the "whole self," is what individuates me as "I" before others or the world. As Reddy claims, it arises in the relation between oneself and the other, between two animals who face to face acquire a sense of being singular before another singular individual. Selfhood is of course enriched and complexified in

cognitive development, but there is nothing that justifies denying the newborn a very basic sense of self and an interpersonal awareness strictly dependent on the face to face interaction. Indeed, Reddy's (2008, 144, 148–49) strong claim is that the "idea of me" and the construction of a theory of mind are made possible by self-conscious emotions, i.e., by our emotional responses to the interaction with others. They do not require, but on the contrary, ground and make possible, the acquisition of these concepts.

Reddy (2008, 129–40) has researched and documented self-conscious reactions of coyness and showing off in infants during their first year of life, sometimes as early as in the second month. One cannot call these reactions full-blown shame or pride, but there are clear continuities. But further, through studies of children with autism and Down syndrome, she has sought to clarify the role of the self-concept in self-conscious emotions. All the children with those conditions that she tested passed the mirror self-recognition test, but showed strikingly different behaviors to their image in the mirror. All children were attracted and intrigued by their reflection, but while children with Down syndrome reacted with self-conscious emotion (coyness or showing off), tried to engage the adult's attention and related to their own image as a tool for communication with others, autistic children tended to show much less self-conscious emotion and to treat their image mainly as an object to play with, exploring movement correspondences and reflection angles, and engaging much less with other people in the room. Reddy (2008, 140–42) concludes that having an objectified view of the self or an objective self-concept from a detached, third-person kind of view, does not produce self-conscious emotion, since autistic children do have that and yet show a clear deficit of self-conscious reaction. The crucial element is intersubjectivity: seeing yourself as a partner in a relation, engaged with another person who perceives you and interacts with you. The key is adopting the second-person, not the third-person perspective on oneself. Adult self-conscious emotions are more complex because, as Lewis remarked, self-concepts and normative standards are at play, and I will add, because we acquire the ability to detach our sense of self from what arises from the immediate interaction with others and the world, we acquire a self-reflective stance and the capacity to temporalize, and so we are able to sustain a sense of self as extending over time through narratives (Goldie 2012), for example, or through values, commitments, loves and cares (Frankfurt 1988; Frankfurt 2006; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011). But the ground is still the second-person relation. The sense of self that is at stake in shame depends on intersubjectivity and relationality.

Shame and audiences

Let me now come back to adult shame, and to the claim that shame requires an audience to be elicited. What does this mean? For one thing, it is obvious that this cannot refer to an actual audience being always present: it is not difficult to think about examples of shame felt in solitude. Such was the case, for instance, for Anna Karenina, who sat alone in silent but anguished shame in the train from Moscow to St. Petersburg, not daring to admit, even to herself, that a respectable and decent married woman like herself could have fallen in love with a dashing young officer like Vronksy (Tolstoy 2004, pt. 1, ch. 24); such was Phaedra's case, again a respectable wife burning with desire for a dashing young man, her stepson Hippolytus, and consumed in secret shame about it, long before anyone else knew about her feelings or had the chance to give her indecent advice and reveal the secret to Hippolytus, as her nurse eventually did (Euripides 1992, *Hippolytus*, lines 373-432). But, moreover, shame is often felt retrospectively, when we remember situations that, at the time and in the presence of witnesses, may not have seemed particularly discomforting. What I feel is shame after the fact, retrospective shame, which is not the same as remembered shame. The clearer instance of what I call retrospective shame occurs precisely when I only discover the shameful aspect of the situation and feel shame about it after it has happened. However, if I did feel shame as I was undergoing the situation, there are still those two possibilities: I can remember that I felt shame then, or I can feel retrospective shame right now about what happened then. Retrospective shame is real shame, felt with full intensity at the moment of remembering it: it is not the reminiscence of an emotion, but the emotion itself. Peter Goldie (2012, 38–39) has a telling example of a man who gets drunk at an office party, climbs on top of a table and starts singing 'Love is like a butterfly' at the top of his voice. At the time, in his drunkenness, he may have only thought about what a wonderful song this was, how merry and happy everyone looked and how much they seemed to be enjoying his performance. But when he remembers the episode the next morning, he will see the situation in a different light, he will realize that his colleagues were laughing *at* him and not *with* him, and only then feel ashamed of himself. This would seem to indicate that the gazes of others, even when coupled with their mockery, are insufficient to cause shame: something is needed on the part of the subject as well, an element that is often cashed out in terms of self-assessment. But I will come back to this later on.

Indeed, the necessary presence of an audience is one of the key differential features between shame and two other closely related emotions: embarrassment and humiliation. One possibility would be to say that these words simply track varying degrees of intensity: embarrassment would be light, inconsequential shame (see Elison 2005, 15; where he quotes W. I. Miller 1993) and humiliation would be acute shame. On closer inspection, however, it is possible to distinguish shame and embarrassment

on other grounds. This is because, although shame is often used as an umbrella term to name the whole emotional family, and thus it makes sense for someone working within the same framework as Elison (2005) to use it as the term for the (basic) affect, what we usually experience as shame is also subject to cognitive modifications. It has been proposed (Harré 1990, 197) that the difference lies in the type of code one is breaching: shame is connected to breaches of moral norms or of a honor code that would deeply impact the evaluation of one's character, while embarrassment would purely be about breaches of convention, of a code of manners, that simply make one look a bit foolish. However, I agree with Zahavi (2012, 305) that this cannot be quite right, because it fails to explain how the exact same situation can cause one or the other depending on the person. The man in Goldie's example feels shame upon remembering his behavior at the party, but it is equally plausible to imagine someone who, in the exact same situation, would not worry much about it on his own, but would feel embarrassed when a colleague greets him the next morning with an ironic smile or a playful remark about his song. Harré's distinction tracks a significant difference, but ascribes it to the wrong instance: what matters is not the objective code (of morals or of manners) that is being breached, but the way in which the situation affects the person's sense of self, and perhaps her self-respect or self-esteem, which is not determined univocally by the social code at play. Shame impacts them, as a feeling of degradation, but embarrassment merely involves a feeling of social awkwardness, a failure of self-presentation in public that does not affect my sense of who I am, so it would be more superficial and more fleeting than shame (see Zahavi 2012, 305): it's easy to laugh about one's embarrassment, but not about one's shame (see R. S. Miller 1997, 24, for some empirical data supporting these claims). In this sense, it is worth noting that the reactions of others are important for one's sense of self and they may vary according to the code that is being breached, thus impacting differently on the subject's self-evaluation and lending more plausibility to Harré's hypothesis, but ultimately the differences in the experiences do not depend solely on the objective social code at play.

Harré's distinction can be seen as conflating the emotion of shame with what I would call "objective" shame, i.e., the verdict of society on what is shameful, or *disgrace*. A good place to start looking at this difference is the dictionary.[33] 'Shame' is defined as: "a painful *feeling* of humiliation or distress caused by the consciousness of wrong or foolish behaviour ... A *loss of respect* or esteem; dishonour ...." The dictionary entry highlights two senses: shame as an individual feeling and shame as dishonor, an external judgment that alters your place in the social world. This is also the case for guilt, which is defined as follows: "the *fact* of having committed a specified or implied offence or crime ... A *feeling* of having committed wrong or failed in an obligation ...." Here again we find guilt as something objective

[33] All dictionary definitions given in the next few paragraphs are taken from the Oxford Dictionaries Online. April 2010. Oxford University Press (accessed February 21, 2012). All italicizations inside the definitions are mine.

—the *fact* of having committed a crime— and guilt as an emotion.[34] If the idea of an ethical culture built around one of these emotions makes sense, it has to rely partially on the existence of the objective side[35], the shared space of evaluations that the dictionary refers to, but this space does not exhaust the emotional phenomena or their ethical underpinnings. This may seem obvious, but in fact the tendency to confuse both these senses is a surprisingly frequent problem that arises in the literature about these emotions and their ethical implications.[36] They are of course interconnected, but they are not equivalent or equally present in all cases, often they are clearly distinct. There is a difference between the public mechanisms to ascribe responsibility and punishments for things regarded as immoral or illegal by the community, and the individual perception of value through emotions and the effort to make sense of them. Clearly, those processes are linked and influence one another, but they can and often do function independently.

While the objective dimension of guilt can be said to correspond for the most part to legal guilt, the objective dimension of shame is largely represented by disgrace, and in a certain sense also humiliation. According to the main dictionaries, disgrace is not an emotion, but a condition. In the Online Oxford English Dictionary, it is defined as follows: "loss of reputation or respect as the result of a dishonourable action ... [*In singular*] a person or thing regarded as shameful and unacceptable ...." A similar definition can be found in the Merriam Webster's Dictionary[37]: "1*a***:** the condition of one fallen from grace or honor; *b***:** loss of grace, favor, or honor. 2**:** a source of shame." Note how close this is to the objective sense of the word "shame" quoted above. Disgrace is, therefore, not an affective phenomenon, but a "social attribute" (Yovel 2003, 1299), i.e., an objective state, or a thing that can cause such a state.

Note, however, that unlike humiliation, which is inflicted, brought about by an external aggressive action, as we will see in a moment, disgrace is perceived in a certain sense as self-generated: one *brings* disgrace upon oneself, one's family, one's group and so on. This, of course, does not preclude false beliefs or delusions about disgrace. It is possible for a person to think that she has a disgraceful

[34] Note, however, that in the case of shame the dictionary gives primacy to the emotional sense of the word, while in the case of guilt, it is the factual sense that appears in the first place. This, I think, is somewhat symptomatic of our way of thinking about these issues.
[35] As Williams rightly remarks (SN, pp. 81-82).
[36] For instance, I would say that Giorgio Agamben (1999) often slides—perhaps knowingly—into this confusion in his *Remnants of Auschwitz* (a text I will discuss in chapter 3), and in my view this is one of the main reasons why he finds fault with Primo Levi's account of survivor shame and guilt. Levi (1989) himself does not make that mistake in the usage of the words, although, as far as I am aware, he does not explain the conceptual difference in an explicit way. For an example of an account which, in my view, misses the point because of a failure to distinguish in any way between these two senses, see Jeff McMahan's "Torture and Collective Shame," in Leist and Singer (2010).
[37] "disgrace." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, 2013. Web. 12 December 2013.

trait or has disgraced herself by some action, while actually the trait or action do not affect her honor or reputation. But the idea of disgrace implies, precisely, that they have been damaged. For example, if a teetotaler who thought that drinking was a sin, was seen drinking a glass of champagne at a party, probably none of the other guests would care about it in the slightest, or they might even celebrate it, but he would still think that he has disgraced himself and he would feel shame.[38] Adriaan van Heerden (2010, 47) spells out the distinction in more detail:

> Shame and disgrace are often treated as equivalent, but it is in fact possible to distinguish between them. ... In his *Rhetoric*, Aristotle defines shame as "the imagination of disgrace." In other words, shame is the subjective, internal visualization of –and identification with– the objective, external state of disgrace. It would be tempting at this point to equate shame and disgrace: when someone transgresses against morality and violates the trust of others, shame is the subjective experience of their objective condition, which is disgrace. However, Aristotle is more subtle than this, as we can see from the fact that he designates shame as a quasi-virtue (in the sense of being a precondition for the acquisition of the true virtues): those who feel shame when they have done something wrong have the potential to learn from their mistakes, but to do something wrong and not feel shame is the final proof of a wicked character. We might say that for Aristotle there is a potential flow from disgrace to shame but that this is not inevitable.

Yirmiyahu Yovel (2003, 1299) makes this point even clearer when he remarks that shame, or rather the sense of shame, "is not shameful—not a cause of disgrace—but, on the contrary, is often praised as the bedrock foundation of civilization." I will come back to the possibility that shame may function as a semi-virtue and motivate us ethically in chapters 2 and 5. The point I want to make here with this distinction is that social attributes, codes and verdicts do not shape our experience of these emotions in a necessary and inescapable way. One may feel ashamed of things that are not disgraceful, and conversely, one may be in a state of disgrace in one's society and not feel ashamed, as was the case of Diogenes the Cynic, who famously chose to live in extreme poverty in a tub in Athens' marketplace, and didn't feel ashamed of any of the provocative things he did to shock Athenians into thinking, while mostly everyone else thought he should feel shame for leading such a life. One may argue that this is at some point the case of all moral reformers who actively criticize with their ways of life the codes of shame and honor in their society: think about the sexual revolution (see Hutchinson 2011 for an interesting discussion of cases of shamelessness and their meaning; see also Calhoun 2004). If shame and embarrassment are experienced differently, the difference cannot be located exclusively at the

[38] I am grateful to Peter Goldie for suggesting this example.

level of the social code one is breaching, because the experience does not crucially depend on the code. It might be statistically true that breaches of the code of manners are generally experienced as impacting the person's sense of self less deeply than breaches of the code of morals or honor, or disgraceful acts, but this is not necessarily the case. Other people have a highly important, but not absolutely determinate, impact on our sense of self.

Martha Nussbaum (2006, 204–5) spells out the experiential difference between shame and embarrassment in a helpful way. She agrees with Scheler (1957) in portraying shame as manifesting a tension between our expectations of how we should be (which, according to her, echo the infantile need for comfort and security) and our awareness of our own vulnerability, finitude and helplessness. Shame clearly concerns our sense of self, by highlighting the limitations of our ego ideals[39] (Nussbaum 2006, 173–74). As Bernard Williams (2008, 93) brilliantly put it, shame helps us "understand how a certain action or thought stands to ourselves, to what we are and to what realistically we can want ourselves to be." Embarrassment does not seem to have this impact, and empirical studies have confirmed this (see R. S. Miller 1997, 22–28). Nussbaum (2006, 204–5) points out the differential features of embarrassment, as opposed to shame: although both typically take the subject by surprise (see also Lynd 1999, 32–34), embarrassment is "momentary, temporary and inconsequential," while shame lasts longer and is more serious. This is the case, according to Nussbaum, because embarrassment does not involve, like shame, a sense of being flawed and defective, but merely a sense that something is socially out of place (marked social attention, often in the form of praise, can cause embarrassment). As such, it is social and contextual; it always requires an actual audience in front of which we are performing awkwardly. As the above examples show, solitary shame is possible, but solitary embarrassment makes no sense. The audience may turn out not to be there—perhaps you simply mistakenly thought that someone had seen or heard you, perhaps it was just a draft cracking open a door what made you think that a colleague had just overheard the end of a phone conversation with your partner where you were calling him or her by a cheesy pet name—but it must be part of the story. And as soon as we are on our own, or we have ascertained that there was nobody looking or listening, embarrassment disappears without leaving a feeling of degradation. We typically feel embarrassed in front of others of things that do not embarrass us when we are alone, such as bodily functions (noises, smells, and so on), or of failures that are conceivable as such only because others are present, such as telling a joke that nobody else finds funny. As we have seen, this need not be the case

[39] This is not to say that shame is aspirational, that we evaluate ourselves according to the ideal of excellence we dream of attaining. The "ideal" here is a minimum level of decency or dignity that ought to be within our reach: what it takes to be a good (not the best possible) professional, or a good (not the best possible) friend, or a good mother (although in the case of parenthood the minimum might for many be the best possible), or a decent human being (not a hero).

in shame, which involves a private component of self-dissatisfaction that is absent from embarrassment.

The case of humiliation is similar, on the one hand, to disgrace, in that it shows the possibility of reacting to external indictments with something other than shame, and, on the other hand, to embarrassment, in that it can be and often is interpreted as different from shame only in terms of intensity: embarrassment would be mild shame, whereas humiliation would be acute shame. Indeed, this—an acute feeling of shame—is what the word often means in many of its uses in English. But again, other differences can be found on closer inspection. Humiliation as a distinct phenomenon comes aggressively from the outside, with no need for its object to have done anything to deserve it; and it is more than a judgment. It carries the connotation of a shaming attack on me; it is a response to an external assault on my dignity or self-worth (see Nussbaum 2006, 204). According to the dictionary[40], it is "the action of humiliating someone or the state of being humiliated"; and 'to humiliate' is defined as "[to] make (someone) feel ashamed and foolish by injuring their dignity and pride ...." In these senses, it is obvious that humiliation requires an audience, but not just any audience: it must be an overtly disapproving one, an aggressive or mocking one. It is usually split into two roles: the attacker and the onlookers, in the eyes of whom one feels humiliated. But while the onlooker may sometimes be oneself, the external attacker is essential. One example of this could be a boss publicly reprimanding an employee for her bad results in front of all her colleagues. Humiliation can be felt in the moment, but it can also be felt retrospectively in solitude, if, for example, the boss made the comments in an indirect and sarcastic way, and only on further solitary reflection the employee realized the extent and cruelty of the criticism implied. But in this case the audience is of course part of the story: one cannot feel humiliated in one's own eyes without the external, shaming attack.

Let me stress here, however, that, if we look again at the definition of the verb 'to humiliate', the connection between humiliating someone and making him or her actually feel shame is not as direct as the dictionary definition implies. Feeling humiliated is not equivalent to feeling ashamed.[41] And in many cases, attempts to humiliate someone or to elicit self-conscious emotions such as guilt or shame can have the exact opposite effect: activating some sort of defensive pride that blocks them or, at least, creates in the person who is the target of such attempts a resistance to the idea that the occasion actually deserves shame. Feeling humiliated, in the sense of unjustly put down in the eyes of others, actually often blocks shame. Forcing someone to perform a particular *self*-assessment is no easy task:

[40] See n. 33 above.
[41] Let me repeat here that the word is often used in English to mean "acute shame." I am referring to the distinctive phenomenon of humiliation as a response to a shaming attack. The boundaries are often blurry, but the distinction is still helpful, because it allows us to spell out a different dynamics between public indictments and private responses and evaluations.

shame is not an automatic adoption of the other's judgment on oneself. It involves something else. Exactly what this 'else' might be is a controversial issue that I will be addressing in detail later on. For now, suffice it to say that the comparisons I just drew between shame and embarrassment, on the one hand, and humiliation, on the other, show two things: first, that as opposed to these other emotions, shame does not require an actual audience, or explicitly imagining that there is one. Neither Anna Karenina nor Phaedra mistakenly thought that there was someone who could read their minds or who had overheard them talking to themselves. They were aware of being alone with their respective secrets and yet felt ashamed—and intelligibly so. And second, that the presence of a disapproving audience does not automatically imply the kind of exposure that leads to shame, as it might lead instead to embarrassment or humiliation, depending on the circumstances, or even to a fall into a state of disgrace that the subject doesn't care about.

Is there any sense in which it can still be maintained that shame requires an audience? Many authors defend the idea that solitary shame is caused by the *internalization* of an audience, of the gaze of the other upon me (see, for instance, Williams 2008; Maibom 2010), which doesn't necessarily involve explicitly imagining or remembering the audience every time. Richard Wollheim's (1999) psychoanalytic account, for instance, explains shame as caused by the introjection of an external authority figure, which becomes an internal "criticizing agency" that judges and censors the ego. The audience, then, is an element of my psyche, something I acquire and internalize as a child that accompanies me all my life and regulates my emotions and behavior. Expressed in less psychoanalytic terms, this is also basically what many other authors, such as Williams (2008) and Maibom (2010), defend. Shame in these kinds of accounts is essentially in all cases a consciousness of exposure to the censoring gaze of another: an introjected and authoritative criticizing agency, a representative of my social honor group, or, in Bernard William's more complex and nuanced formulation, an embodiment of the world I (want to) live in and its expectations of me (Williams 2008, 84). In shame, I would see that I am being seen,[42] and I would judge myself according to that external gaze, as Mabel Waring, Anna Karenina and Phaedra did.

But who actually *is* this "other"? And what about the cases where there is an audience, but its opinions have no effect whatsoever on the subject? Consider again the examples of how social indictments and social codes need not determine my experience of shame, of the teetotaler ashamed of behavior that his surrounding group approves of, and of Diogenes unashamed of what all his fellow citizens consider disgraceful. These are two examples in which shame seems to be disconnected from social rejection

[42] I am grateful to Antonio Gómez Ramos for this Sartrean formulation, which so neatly captures the reciprocity of shame.

and social evaluations, as the indictments come from the social environment of the subject, from the people he is surrounded by. Both cases are of course different, in that the teetotaler is completely disconnected from the conventions applied by other guests of the party, whereas Diogenes is not disconnected from those applied by his fellow citizens. The shame of the teetotaler is independent of what other guests think, and it does not arise in resistance to, or as a criticism of, their opinions. In the case of Diogenes, however, his shamelessness is informed by the values of his fellow citizens, which are wrong in his opinion: he criticizes the conventions from the inside, and is by no means oblivious of them (for an analysis of Diogenes' shamelessness, see Hutchinson 2011; Calhoun 2004). But both examples underscore the fact that not all audiences have the power to shame us: other people's judgments of oneself are not the only force that contributes to shape one's own sense of self and self-assessment, and they need not determine them. For instance, generally we are not very affected by the judgments of people we consider clearly inferior to ourselves for whichever reason.[43] As I remarked in my comments to Reddy's views, interaction is the ground, but higher-level cognitive abilities give us some measure of independence.

Those who defend the idea of shame as caused by an internalized audience argue that, in such cases, the relevant other capable of making the subject feel shame is not the society where these subjects happen to be, nor a representative of it. The criticizing agency of shame is an introjected or internalized one, it is someone whose opinion they care about, someone embodying a code they can respect: a parent, a peer, etc. According to some authors, we do have a certain degree of autonomy in choosing the audience that can shame us: in some way or another, we need to accord them that authority, or otherwise recognize it (see Williams 2008, 84–85 for a detailed discussion of this issue). However, if the subject respects the audience and the values it enforces, and recognizes its authority, to what extent is it genuinely other? Following this logic, it would seem that one's own moral code or values could do the job on their own. Moreover, the internalized observer is not always clearly identifiable; the question "who is observing and judging me?" is often very hard or even impossible to answer, or has only one obvious answer: myself (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 30–32). Why then posit a mechanism of internalization? According to Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, pt. one), the often referred-to phenomenology of the gaze of another is more often than not a metaphor through which we sometimes seek to make sense of shame. It is part of some, but not all, instances of the emotion, and therefore cannot be a necessary factor for shame to arise. Indeed, Diogenes' endeavor can be construed as directed toward recognizing no judge but himself. If this is so, would it not be more natural, and more faithful to the phenomenology of shame, to say that I am always the main judge, that the standards at play in this self-assessment are my standards? This is what Deonna,

[43] Williams (2008, 82–83) has some interesting remarks on the identity of the audience.

Rodogno and Teroni (2011) defend, as I will explain at length in chapter 2. Helen Lynd (1999, 29–30) writes: "this public exposure of even a very private part of one's physical or mental character could not in itself have brought about shame unless one had already felt within oneself, not only dislike, but shame for these traits. ... it is the exposure of oneself to oneself that is crucial."

Now, in exploring the claim that shame requires a real or an internalized audience, two aspects have been at play that I haven't explicitly disentangled: exposure, or exposability, and self-assessment. According to those accounts where an audience is necessary, I feel shame because others see or might see something negative or inadequate about me, and this will prompt them to judge me negatively and probably reject me. But the analysis of this claim has taken me to the point of asking what is the crucial element here, the negative self-assessment or exposability? Those are the two key elements of the role that the audience is supposed to play in shame: its evaluation of me and its external perspective on myself. One might want to get rid of the metaphor of the audience as a necessary element, but these two aspects remain on the table. Different accounts of shame can place emphasis on one or the other, and thus we come back to the two remaining strands of the claim that shame is social. As I said a few pages ago, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 32–37) distinguish three strands of the social claim: shame as requiring an audience, shame as heteronomous, and shame as requiring a change of perspective. Up to this point I have been focusing on shame as requiring an audience. In chapter 2 I will discuss different accounts that focus on evaluation, on the endorsement of values and norms, that is, on autonomy and heteronomy. The accounts under review in chapter 3 focus mainly on exposure and "perspective-taking," in Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni's term.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter I have offered an overview of two clusters of controversial issues that one comes across when trying to give an account of shame: how to characterize the selfhood at stake in shame, and what to make of the claim that shame is a social emotion in the sense of requiring an audience. In particular, I have analyzed two standard claims about the self of shame: is it right to claim that shame focuses on the self of the subject ashamed? And does it make sense to claim that shame focuses on the "whole self"? My answers to both these questions were a qualified yes: if the claims seem to be problematic it is not because they mischaracterize shame, it is because the notion of "self" that underlies many accounts is problematic. What shame reveals is that the "self" at stake is not an encapsulated and independent entity with clearly self-defined features and boundaries, or a set of personal values. While I do defend that shame focuses on myself (and not on others) and individuates *me*, this does not mean

that shame does this by providing a more or less full objective description in terms of features and qualities. Shame individuates me experientially (who am I? *This* one). In my view, it can be very helpful to think in terms of the phenomenological notion of selfhood that Dan Zahavi (2005) proposes, complemented by Reddy's idea that certain forms of self-consciousness (and definitely the form that grounds shame) arise through interaction. According to Zahavi (2005), selfhood is a form of givenness of experience. Indeed, he criticizes the talk about "the self," because using a noun makes us think of a thingly entity, while selfhood in the minimal sense he articulates is a mode of givenness, the first-personal character of experience, the fact that experiences are given for someone. Selfhood in this sense "refers to the fact that the experiences I am living through are given differently (but not necessarily better) to me than to anybody else" (Zahavi 2009, 557). So, to repeat, selfhood in this sense is a "how," a mode of experience. This is what he calls minimal self. Zahavi himself claims that his minimal notion is not enough to give a cogent account of shame: a being with only minimal selfhood could not feel it (Zahavi 2012). But of course his minimal notion of selfhood was never intended to do that kind of work. The further ingredients we need can be found in Reddy (2008), in Sartre (1972), and in Cavell (1995), as I will argue mainly in chapter 3, but the gist of what the self of shame amounts to is summarized by León (2013, 208) in a quote worth repeating: "… it is *my* embodied and *my* situated existence that are cogently experienced in shame, but as accessible from a perspective which is out of my control, which is external to me." The self of shame, I will argue, is what could be called the interpersonal self. The self-individuating and holistic character of the experience of shame can be made sense of in terms of structural features of consciousness, such as embodiment and situatedness (see León 2013), as well as recognition (Cavell 1995) as I will argue in chapter 3, but it sounds mysterious and exaggerated if we think of the self of shame in terms of self-relevant values (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011).

Similarly, when thinking about the social character of shame, one should go beyond those accounts implying that shame always requires an explicit audience and amounts to an uncritical adoption of their negative verdict on me. To begin with, many of the accounts that reason this way imply that it is always obvious and easy to distinguish my own self-assessment from the assessment of others (that autonomy and heteronomy are always straightforward), and that others have very little to do with my self-individuation. Those are notions that the experience of shame throws into question. In my view, and in agreement with the gist of Reddy's arguments, relationality is an essential part of shame, and the selfhood at stake in shame is partially shaped in reference to others, but the relation should be carefully articulated. The margin one has for criticism and distancing should neither be underplayed nor exaggerated. The social element is crucial for shame, but not the only one at play. Some progress can be made towards an understanding of shame by clarifying how its relational structure is

articulated with the self-evaluative aspect. In the following chapters I will analyze those dimensions in turn, and clarify what they entail, in order to then endeavor to articulate them in a more satisfactory way. This should help us answer the guiding question, namely, is shame a moral emotion? Does it have a role in ethics?

CHAPTER 2
SHAME AS A MORAL EMOTION. SHAME, PROSOCIALITY AND AUTONOMY

After having reviewed some discussions on the nature of shame, in this chapter I will explore the ways in which shame is typically linked to ethics and morality.[44] Is shame a moral emotion? If so, in which sense? My aim here is to explore the ideas of several authors who think shame is relevant in this respect and look for the elements that, in their view, make it so. As Kevin Mulligan (2009, 262) explains, "emotions are said to be moral, as opposed to non-moral, in virtue of their objects. They are also said to be moral, for example morally good, as opposed to immoral, for example morally bad or evil, in virtue of their objects, nature, motives, functions or effects." From this it should be clear that "moral emotion" is not always equivalent to "morally good" or "virtuous" emotion. Think about contempt, resentment or disgust: the extent to which any of these can be said to be virtuous is not clear, yet they are often classified as "moral emotions" because their objects, at least a significant part of their typical objects, belong to the moral domain. Both senses of 'moral emotion' as explained above in the quote by Mulligan are at stake in the debates about the moral role of shame.

Not everyone agrees, though, that this emotion is essentially connected to morality or ethics: on some accounts, it may sometimes feature into these kinds of considerations, but not fundamentally. David Velleman's (2001) is one such, since he links shame fundamentally to our capacity of self-presentation, and as we will see, Lévinas (2003) and Sartre (1972) can also be read as neutral in this way. Now, one very large group of authors think that shame is moral in the sense of morally good in very broad terms. On the one hand, some of these authors, such as Helen Lynd (1999), Gabriele Taylor (1985) or Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) stress self-assessment as they key to understanding why shame is moral and how it works in this domain. On the other hand, some others, such as Cheshire Calhoun (2004), Heidi Maibom (2010), Lisa Guenther (2011; 2012) and, to some extent, Bernard Williams (2008), locate the ethical value of shame in its social element, in its reference to others. All the authors I just mentioned agree, however, that shame is generally a positive force in our ethical lives, it makes us better or at least tends to steer us in a good direction. In contrast to this, there are other authors, such as psychologist June Price Tangney (see Tangney and Dearing 2004) and historian of ideas Ruth Leys (2009), who see shame as morally bad, a generally negative force.

[44] See the beginning of the next section for a distinction between ethics and morality.

One thing that will become clear in my overview of the very different accounts of shame as a moral emotion is that most of them link it to relatively high-order cognitive processes: in order to feel it, one must be capable of self-reflection, possess quite a developed self-concept and a fair understanding of norms and normativity. This is not so surprising, since these elements are likely to be necessary for a full understanding that one has transgressed a moral norm. In any case, it is obvious that the picture of shame emerging from such accounts must look very different from the picture that would result from considering it a basic emotion, or an affect, as Jeff Elison's (2005) wants. But one does not need to accept the affect theory in order to think of shame in more basic terms. The phenomenological tradition, Sartre and Lévinas for example, offers a less cognitively demanding picture of this emotion. Is there a way to connect these sorts of accounts?

One answer could be that these accounts are compatible with one another, since there are many different types of shame, some simpler than others, but moral shame is a cognitively demanding one. Another answer, which I will explore in chapter 3 when I discuss Sartre, could be that there is a more basic level of ethics, which is presupposed by the higher one and is the one at which shame operates. This second approach is the solution I favor in this dissertation to many of the disputes around the ethical role of shame and what it amounts to. As I aim to show, the account that results from such an approach is more faithful to the phenomenology of shame, and goes beyond the level of social conventions and norms at which many disputes are located, thus allowing room for the seemingly conflicting conclusions that different authors reach, while retaining a sense of why shame has a special link to ethics. An approach like this still accommodates the fact that there are different varieties of shame, but provides insights on the nature of the link between the more and the less cognitively demanding ones. It can also help us understand how the more basic forms of the emotion fuel and foster the learning required for the more cognitively demanding forms.

In this chapter, I start by briefly reviewing different possible ways of thinking about the role of emotions in our ethical lives. I then proceed to look more carefully at the various views on the ethical role of shame. A crucial reference point for all these discussions is the contrast between shame and guilt, which I will explore as a way of getting into the particularities of different accounts of shame as moral or immoral. In the final section of this chapter, I review the common elements of all these accounts and conclude that, to various degrees, they involve high-order cognitive features. However, there are many other accounts of shame that describe it as a much less cognitively demanding phenomenon: on the one hand, some theorists defend that shame is a basic emotion or an affect (see Elison 2005 for such an account); on the other hand, phenomenological accounts by Scheler (1957), Sartre (1972) or Lévinas (2003), although highly complex and nuanced, do not seem to require such

highly cognitive abilities. Admittedly, these accounts do not regard shame as necessarily moral. As I said above, one possibility would then be that moral shame is a basic, non-moral affect of shame *plus* acquired normative capacities that make one moral. It would only have a role in ethics once those capacities are in place. First one becomes moral, and then shame can start being directed at moral objects. Other authors, however, starting with Aristotle, assign it a very prominent role in moral education, which would seem to indicate that the moral emotion precedes and contributes to create the normative capacities of a full-blown moral agent (see, for other examples, Heller 2003; Ferlosio 2000). These questions will in turn lead me into chapter 3.

THE ROLE OF THE EMOTIONS IN OUR ETHICAL LIVES

Before going into the particularities of shame, I would like to present a brief review of the main philosophical positions concerning the role of emotions in our ethical lives, drawing mainly on Ronald de Sousa (2001; 2013). But first I would like to say a few words about the classical distinction (which can be traced back at least to Hegel) in moral philosophy between 'ethics' and 'morality,' a distinction that Bernard Williams (2013, 6; 2012, xiii) carefully reformulates and defends for his critical purposes. I present it here in Williams' terms. Accordingly, 'morality' falls within a Kantian picture, focusing on concerns about duty and autonomy, while 'ethics' falls within an Aristotelian picture, focusing on broader *eudemonistic* concerns, the good life and virtue in the Ancient Greek sense. The central notion of morality would be that of moral obligation, of universal norms dictated by reason, while the central notion of ethics would be the good life, or human flourishing. Williams (2013, 6) writes:

> I am going to suggest that morality should be understood as a particular development of the ethical, one that has a special significance in modern Western culture. It peculiarly emphasizes certain ethical notions rather than others, developing in particular a special notion of obligation, and it has some peculiar presuppositions. ... From now on, therefore, I shall for the most part use "ethical" as the broad term to stand for what this subject is certainly about, and "moral" and "morality" for the narrower system...

What Williams critically refers to as "peculiar presuppositions" are Kantian ones: autonomy and universality, founded in the faculty of reason. Moral obligation derives its authority from reason: when a rational agent deliberates autonomously, i.e., without the interference of any consideration external to his reason, on what he ought to do, the conclusion is moral and binding because it is a product of his own reason, and it is universal and altruistic because reason operates in the same way for everyone,

such that any rational agent, regardless of his individual peculiarities, would act in the same way.[45] According to Williams, this approach is far too narrow and idealized, and it does not allow us to account for the complexities of our ethical lives and ethical dilemmas, which are crucially connected to our sense of self as individuals situated in contexts. But in his view no philosophical systematizing can hope to do justice to the complexity of our ethical lives. The far wider, flexible, and unsystematic Aristotelian approach, with its focus on the Socratic question "how should one live?," is much more apt to do that (see Williams 2013, chap. 1 especially, although the whole book makes a sustained argument to this effect).

This distinction, however, is not employed or found useful by everyone, not even by all moral philosophers, and as Williams himself is well aware, centuries of language use have made it virtually impossible to keep it in a very systematic way: one fine example he uses is the fact that 'moral philosophy' and 'ethics' are two synonymous names for the same discipline (Williams 2013, 6). Even after clearly articulating this distinction in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy*, Williams himself keeps using the adjective 'moral' quite freely, and restricts his distinctive terminological use to the noun 'morality.' Keeping the distinction systematically for the adjective as well would involve tampering with well-established technical terms and running the risk of misunderstandings that would require clarificatory notes. Instead of this, I would like to state here that I see the ethical enterprise in the broader terms favored by Williams, and in my discussion of the ethical role of shame, I do not see myself as bound to the narrower conceptions of what he calls morality. It is *prima facie* not easy to account for an important role of the emotions within the morality system, and it requires some quite sophisticated moves that sometimes leave the emotions looking rather strange. Indeed, I will be defending that many of the problems and implausibilities I find in some accounts of shame as a moral emotion, such as those offered by Taylor (1985) or by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011), stem precisely from the attempts to make it relevant within the narrower conception of morality.

What role, then, do emotions play in ethics? According to Ronald de Sousa (2001, 109–110), the history of philosophy affords three positions. First is the Stoic tradition (and Kant is similar to the Stoics in this respect), which assigns emotions no moral worth whatsoever, and views them rather as hurdles to be overcome and left behind in the service of the good life. A second group of authors, such as Hutchenson, Hume or Smith, think that *some*, but not all, emotions, such as sympathy, are moral in that they tend to motivate other-regarding behavior. Emotions that fail to so motivate are amoral or

[45] I maintain the masculine pronoun throughout in my rendering of his views, to signal that for the most part I agree with the feminist criticism that the Enlightened claims of universality always hide a situated subject: a male, white, bourgeois subject. Context and situation cannot be (and have not been) left out of the picture, however tacitly they might be at play.

even evil. Finally, de Sousa links the third possibility to Aristotle's thought. The view here would be that all emotions are moral, because they contribute to the good life. The question is not sorting out the good ones from the bad ones, but rather, as Peter Goldie (2000; 2012) repeatedly says in an Aristotelian spirit, learning, or teaching oneself, to feel them in the *appropriate* situations and to a *proportionate* degree. I should mention at the outset that my own position in this study is opposed to the first tradition and tends to favor views that fall under the third. But assuming that emotions do play some kind of role in our ethical lives, which role is it that they play and how do they work?

After having presented the three positions afforded by the history of philosophy, de Sousa goes on to examine the current debates on the moral emotions focusing on two issues: naturalness and subjectivism. In the debates about naturalness, the main concern is establishing the degrees to which moral emotions are natural (inherited biological mechanisms), cultural (a product of socialization and education), or expressive of individual free-will.[46] And as a parallel question, how natural is ethics itself? As far as the naturalness of emotions is concerned, de Sousa (2001, 111–112) dismisses two extremes as too implausible to be taken seriously. On the one extreme there is the view that emotions are only bodily feelings, and thus entirely passive and involuntary, but this view doesn't allow to account for the thought-dependency of many emotions. On the other extreme there is the Sartrean view that emotions are "magical transformations of the world" (Sartre 2003, 193), transformations of the way in which we perceive reality when it does not conform to our goals. Therefore, as de Sousa (2001, 212) puts it, emotions for Sartre are "chosen ... They are purely the expression of our individual free-will." But this view cannot easily account for the element of passivity that seems to be part of all emotions. The correct view, according to de Sousa (and I agree), would have to combine activity and passivity, bodily feelings, social construction, and even room for individual character dependency in the right degrees (de Sousa 2001, 112–113). I have already addressed this issue in chapter 1 and I will not dwell on it here. As for ethics itself, the issue would be whether our biological dispositions have evolved to motivate and foster altruistic and pro-social behaviors and attitudes, or whether, on the contrary, the latter require fighting such dispositions through rationality or some such higher cognitive capacity. Again, both positions would have to be nuanced to arrive at a plausible view, but my investigation does not require working out a very detailed position in this regard. I will be assuming that ethics requires some degree of sensibility, because our affective life puts us in touch with values that we would otherwise not understand.

This brings me to the more interesting issue of subjectivism, which de Sousa discusses in more detail. He asks the question in this way: "do emotions apprehend antecedently existing facts about value, or

[46] If I understand de Sousa correctly, I take it that by "natural" here he means something close to "biological" or "of purely biological origin."

are facts about value mere projections of emotions?" (de Sousa 2001, 116). Here, after having rejected versions of the two extreme views, Plato's pure objectivism and Spinoza's emotivism, de Sousa works his way to his own view: axiologism. He sees much to agree with in the Humean-Aristotelian view that the motivational power and logical grounding of ethical considerations is to be found in the affective life. Moral choice only has a point because we have preferences; we care about things, which is an affective phenomenon. What we like and dislike, what we find pleasurable and painful, is the rough foundation of moral value, but "those sentiments only earn the qualifier 'moral' when they have been elaborated and integrated into the moral code of a social group, where stable and universalizable principles replace the inevitably changeable impulses of momentary sentiment" (de Sousa 2001, 119). Reason has its role, but it is a subsidiary one: value is grounded in the emotions. Recall Hume's famous phrase: "reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions" (Hume 1978a, T II.3.3 415). The problem here is that polarizing the evaluation between positive and negative, pleasurable and painful, phenomena, as Hume did, "flattens out" the realm of value, which is much more complex and nuanced, and it is not neatly divided into positive and negative. De Sousa's axiologism holds that emotions reveal a wide variety of values in terms of formal objects, as I explained in chapter 1. But again, are these values subjective or objective? De Sousa (2001, 120) explains:

> [My position] remains an intermediate position, in that *what* is detected by the apprehension of emotion is not, as in the Platonic view, a transcendent reality. Given the social nature of human life, the facts to which our emotions give us access typically, though surely not exclusively, concern social relations. So the order of reality to which emotions give us access is the *relatively objective* world of human values. This apparent oxymoron reflects the fact that the realities revealed by emotions are local to certain organisms in certain environments. Emotional repertoires can differ, as can the significance of their members; but these differences are not arbitrary. There is no independent access to the world revealed by emotion.

Pure emotivism is avoided by the fact that the apprehension of value is not an entirely biological phenomenon, but rather can be and is shaped, refined an educated by interaction and enculturation, as I explained in chapter 1. De Sousa stresses that the sphere of value we access is that of human value, a shared space that we cannot constitute individually. He also stresses the notion of reflective equilibrium as the key to how we can educate our emotions and improve ourselves, both individually and collectively: "We can judge whether an emotion is to be countenanced as part of a good life, and its motivational power acknowledged, only as we test the veracity of perceptual information: by looking at the same thing from different points of view. This means, in effect, by appealing to other perceptions or to other emotions," as well as, of course, by appealing to reasons, knowledge and logic (de Sousa

2001, 122; see also de Sousa 2008, 19). I agree with him in this. The role of the emotions in ethics is therefore crucial, as affectivity puts us in touch with value, but more than a single emotional reaction is needed to pronounce something ethically good or bad.

SHAME AND ETHICS

Let us now turn to the ethical role of shame in particular. The debates on this issue have run roughly as follows. According to some versions of shame (of Aristotelian inspiration), this emotion is essential and positive for morality. As Myles Burnyeat puts it, in this interpretation shame is the "semi-virtue of the learner": an emotion that points towards virtue, by signaling our mistakes and thus allowing us to learn from them (Burnyeat 1980, 78). As Adriaan van Heerden (2010, 47) sums up, "[t]hose who feel ashamed of their mistakes have the potential to learn from them, but to make a mistake and not to feel ashamed is the final proof of a wicked character." And we don't need to be ancient Greeks to see things roughly this way: nowadays shamelessness is still generally equated to indignity and immorality, which seems to indicate that shame is morally valuable, at least some times. The problem is that many instances of shame seem to go against this view, because this emotion is often seemingly unconnected to ethics: one can feel ashamed of one's origins or one's personal appearance, as teenagers typically are, for instance. On other occasions, the desire to hide our shame can lead us to immoral actions, so its connection to commendable behavior and ethical learning is less than clear.

Some other accounts cast shame as primitive, antisocial and maladaptive in our current Western societies, occasionally going as far as saying that we would be better off without it. These kinds of accounts are roughly inspired by anthropologist Ruth Benedict's (2005) distinction between "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures," according to which shame cultures would be morally inferior, because they are centered on appearances, reputation and peer's opinions, and not on the autonomous, rational judgment of the subject. This characterization obviously relies on a Kantian conception of morality. A particularly forceful example of this kind of views can be found in the work of psychologist June Price Tangney (Tangney and Dearing 2004; Dearing and Tangney 2011, 399), but many other authors, such as historian of ideas Ruth Leys (2009), share this opinions in one way or another. According to this view, shame is the moral emotion of an archaic community. It worked for our ancestors in their highly hierarchized groups, in a horde of hunters-gatherers, or even in the heroic societies of saga Scandinavia (see W. I. Miller 1993) or Homeric Greece (see Dodds 2004); but in our current modern world, shame is detrimental for morality, because it promotes antisocial behavior: all kinds of dubious strategies to hide our mistakes, avoidance of contact with others, aggressive

reactions against those who uncovered our shame, low self-esteem, depression, addictions, etc. Indeed, Dearing and Tangney (2011, 5) claim that "painful feelings of shame and the related action tendencies seem to result in *a short circuit of the moral compass*, which often causes things to go awry in the interpersonal realm" (my emphasis). According to Ruth Leys (2009, 131), shame is also problematic because, by emphasizing identity instead of action, it tends to weaken the concept of responsibility and dilute its importance, thus jeopardizing the chances of a dialogue about what is moral and what is not.

Is it possible to save the intuition that shame has some ethical significance, while also accounting for non-moral instances of shame, and for its seemingly antisocial character? Both views I just sketched seem to contain some grain of truth, but formulated in this way, they seem incompatible. The question under dispute is whether shame is (predominantly) a virtuous or an immoral motion, and the conclusion is usually drawn in terms of action tendencies. However, in my view, this will not allow the debate to be settled. Indeed, I do not think that this question can be settled, and will be arguing that any ethical value that shame may have lies not in motivating any particular sort of action, but rather in opening us up to a certain way of understanding others, and ourselves in relation to them.

But this is to anticipate too much. Let us return to the matter at hand. In what follows I will examine in more detail some of the accounts of shame as a moral emotion and draw some conclusions from them. First I will look at the accounts that cast shame in a negative light, relying to a certain extent on a particular way of distinguishing shame and guilt. I will focus for the most part in Tangney and Dearing's account. Then I will look at three very different ways of defending shame as ethically valuable. The first, offered by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, tries to show that shame embodies autonomous evaluations. The second, offered by Bernard Williams, finds the value of shame in the peculiar way in which this emotion links individual character to social evaluations. The third account, offered in different versions by Cheshire Calhoun and Heidi Maibom, argues that in order to understand the ethical role of shame, we need to understand morality as more than a rational, deliberative enterprise. Morality is a practice shared with others, and shame can serve as a guide to this interactive side, which does not imply heteronomy in the rational dimension. Finally, in my conclusions, I will look at some features that all these accounts share, and suggest a different approach that might better illuminate what is specifically ethical about shame.

SHAME AS AN "IMMORAL" EMOTION

Throughout the history of Western thought, the emotion of shame has often been regarded as linked to commendable moral behavior, specifically as having the power to prevent indecent acts and chastise those who commit them. An example of this is the Aristotelian view I sketched above. But there seem to be many situations where this is not the case. As I wrote above, there are many views in psychology, sociology, anthropology and philosophy (see the remarks to this effect made by Williams 2008, chap. 1–3) that regard shame in a negative light, as embodying archaic codes of conduct and group organization that we would do better without. As I have suggested before, this is also largely the result of the deep transformation that Western culture underwent in Modernity. As Dov Cohen (2003, 1097) reports, the successive translations of the Bible into English since the 17th C. have progressively substituted shame terms with guilt terms. This seems to indicate that the culturally perceived moral relevance of these emotions has changed, and guilt is now perceived as the appropriate moral emotion in situations where shame used to be the emotion of choice.

Furthermore, the rise of the individual in Modernity involved a process of criticizing, challenging and ultimately dismantling old social structures and codes of honor, which meant rejecting the old categories of the disgraceful and fighting against the shame and humiliation that often accompanied social stigma and disgrace. Yirmiyahu Yovel (2003) provides a fine representative example of this process in Europe in his analysis of the 'picaresque' novels written by Spanish "Conversos" or "Marranos" of the 14th to 17th Centuries, the Jews forced to convert to Catholicism or else be expelled by the Spanish monarchs after 1492. Though religion had already been a reason for discrimination and a marker of social status throughout the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance, with the expulsions and forced conversions, and the advent of the Spanish Inquisition, only being part of an "old Christian" family conferred genuine social status. As a result, all Conversos became suspects of hypocrisy, of pretending to practice Catholicism while secretly retaining their Jewish faith. Yovel shows how the picaresque novel, with its rogue shameless characters that live outside dignified society, became a way for Converso authors to voice, under a falsely moralizing pretense, their criticism of a hollow honor code that valued inheritance and blood over personal merit. While these novels are highly critical, their tone is often veiled and ambivalent. This ambivalence is often a camouflage strategy before the Inquisition, but at times it also reveals a genuine ambivalence in the views and feelings of these authors, who on occasion seem to assent to the honor code they criticize and display shame of their condition. Shame in this context appears as a negative force, which ties highly intelligent and discerning individuals, such as Mateo Alemán, to an old value system whose emptiness and contradictions they understand too well, and which doesn't allow them a way out of their status as

pariahs. If I read Yovel's analysis correctly, Alemán's autonomous critical judgment of the values of the Spanish society of his time, brilliantly reflected in his picaresque novel *Guzmán de Alfarache* (Alemán 1996), would be undermined by the heteronomous force of the shame he felt of his Converso family background, which he desperately and unsuccessfully tried to hide all his life, and which also shows in some tensions and contradictions in the text. I do not entirely share Yovel's diagnosis, but the issue of the shame felt by the oppressed is central to Cheshire Calhoun's (2004) account of moral shame, so I will go back to it when I discuss her views. In any case, the way Yovel lays out these issues is very representative of the views I discuss in this section, which interpret shame as linked to these old-fashioned honor codes: they think of shame in terms of what Cohen calls "primal shame" (Cohen 2003, 1083), the shame of being dishonored or disgraced. In this sense, it would be a negative force, undermining and sometimes preventing autonomous judgment.

One of the features of many negative accounts of shame as a moral emotion is that they rely on an unfavorable comparison with guilt. The first, or at least the most influential author to use this contrast to these ends was anthropologist Ruth Benedict in *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword* (2005), her classic study of Japanese society around the time of the Second World War. In this book she devised her famous distinction between "shame cultures" and "guilt cultures." This distinction relies on the idea that shame and guilt are fundamental moral emotions, that can and do articulate the value systems and ethics of whole societies, and because shame cultures are also typically honor cultures of the kind just discussed, the comparison typically plays to the advantage of guilt (Benedict 2005; Tangney and Dearing 2004), although there are many who disagree (Williams 2008; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011).

According to the "shame cultures" versus "guilt cultures" paradigm, these two emotions would represent two different styles of moral self-assessment. In shame, one would question one's identity in virtue of the judgments of one's honor group. In guilt, one would question one's behavior in terms of the norms of duty and morality. To employ Kantian terminology, shame would imply a heteronomous evaluation, whereas guilt would imply an autonomous one. Shame would involve a feeling of exposure to a judging gaze that finds one at fault, whereas guilt would involve the feeling of responsibility for one violating a moral norm. While shame can apply to non-moral and utterly involuntary aspects of our identity, guilt always applies to voluntary actions and omissions and is distinctively moral. Following Bernard Williams' account (2008, 89–90), guilt is always caused by actions or omissions (behavior) that elicit in other people reactive attitudes of indignation and resentment, and is typically associated with attempts to placate the victim's anger and compensate for the damage done. Shame, however, can be caused not only by actions and omissions, but also by things that are entirely outside

the person's voluntary control, such as her physical features or things that befall her (any aspect of the self). Occasions for shame often elicit in others contempt, aversion or disgust, and the ashamed subject typically reacts by trying to escape or hide from others, although many authors argue that after reflection shame can motivate attempts to change and improve oneself (see, e.g. Williams 2008; Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011; Morgan 2008).

This construal of both emotions shows why many accounts take guilt to be the superior moral emotion. It is purer and more mature, more responsive to reasons, and so a better guide to morality. According to Ruth Leys (2009, 13, 186), emphasizing shame over guilt as the key to ethics invites us to focus on *what we are* as opposed to *what we have done*, which tends to enshrine identity and difference as what is crucial at the moral price of diluting responsibility. Further, the "behavioral markers" of these emotions, i.e., the tendencies for action that they promote, seem to support Tangney's and Dearing's verdict that shame has no constructive role in morality and is maladaptive, while guilt is constructive and adaptive. While shame leads to avoiding (anti-social) behavior, guilt leads to amending (pro-social) behavior (Tangney and Dearing 2004, 48). Moreover Tangney and Dearing (2004) and Brené Brown (2007) also believe that shame is unhealthy: for them, shame is an irrationally harsh global judgment on ourselves that can only have negative consequences, such as aggressiveness and depression. However, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) argue that these conclusions come from various testing biases and from too narrow a focus on the immediate consequences of the emotional episode. According to them, in the long run, shame can be a motivation of change for the better.

In any case, though, the issue goes even deeper. It goes all the way down to a dualistic framework that strictly separates mind from body (and world), where the mind is inside and inaccessible to others and the body and its behavior are outside and visible. This roughly Cartesian framework has come under heavy criticism in philosophy and to a lesser extent psychology, but it is still widely employed by psychologists, as Reddy (2008, chap. 1) remarks and criticizes. If we abandon this framework and instead think of the mind as embodied and interactive, the gap between mind and behavior collapses, or at least becomes significantly less sharp and impermeable as it initially seemed, and this has a huge impact on the way to address issues such as the one I am focusing on. One of the immediate consequences of discarding dualism here would be that shame and guilt cannot be so easily isolated from one another. I am not denying that the distinction is valid and useful, but rather that its validity is limited and cannot be taken beyond a certain point, that there are countless situations where the choice that Tangney and Dearing are recommending (choosing guilt and discarding shame) is impossible, because one emotion entails the other.

As I explained in chapter 1, the distinction between shame and guilt that Tangney and Dearing (2004) use, following Helen Block Lewis' (1971) influential account, is based on the differentiation between (inner) self and (outer) behavior. *Shame* focuses on the self, while *guilt* focuses on behavior— "I am a bad person" versus "I did something bad." In this sense, shame would be a globalizing indictment of the self, whereas guilt would be focalized on actions and omissions. One of the problems with evaluating this account is that Tangney and Dearing never clearly define what they mean by "self." However, from the examples it seems that whatever makes up the self in their view is inner, invisible, static, and disconnected from behavior. The idea that guilt is morally productive while shame is not, as put forward by Tangney and Dearing, is heavily associated with the distinction between inner self and outer behavior. Guilt has a much more concrete object of focus, namely external and observable behavior, and so seems obviously easier to manage both publicly and privately, as well as less dangerous for the psychological well-being of the guilty individual. The upshot seems to be that, as a therapist, for example, one should encourage clients to approach their failings in terms of guilt, and not of shame. This view seems to be so intuitively attractive that it is working its way into pop psychology and self-help (for a popular example, see Brown 2007). This is worrying, because it covers over much-needed nuances and fails to address the ways in which behavior might embody or even constitute some aspects of selfhood.

Having raised these wider theoretical concerns, I now take a closer look at some particular problems. For Tangney and Dearing (2004), shame and guilt are not situation-specific; both emotions can arise on the same occasions. In shame I focus on my own self as a whole and I perform a negative self-evaluation: I feel that I am a bad person, an unworthy person and so on. This type of evaluation is linked to avoidance and deflecting strategies: I run away from the situation; I try to shift the blame onto someone else; I lash out in anger at whoever happens to be more vulnerable around me. This in turn only leads to more shame and disconnection from others. Because of this spiral, people who are prone to experiencing shame are more likely than others to suffer from reduced self-esteem, depression and addictions, such as alcoholism. Ronda L. Dearing has conducted an extensive series of studies that show a strong connection between shame proneness and alcoholism since co-authoring *Shame and Guilt* (2004) with Tangney. Guilt, however, focuses on behavior, which, according to Tangney and Dearing (2004), is perceived as easier to change or compensate for than a faulty self. In guilt, I feel bad because I did something I should not have done, I made a mistake. But guilt does not necessarily involve a sense of inferiority, unworthiness or powerlessness, so the awareness of my mistake often leads me to try to repair the damage and compensate with apologies, which increases my sense of connection to others. Given the fact that behavior is considered easier to modify and

control, together with the positive motivation of feeling still connected to others, guilt makes it easier to learn from mistakes than shame, and it enhances our sense of responsibility.

Tangney's and Dearing's views inherit from the "shame cultures" versus "guilt cultures" paradigm some of the Neokantian presuppositions about morality and the moral self that Bernard Williams criticizes. However, their account does not focus on these presuppositions because their take on morality is functionalistic. "Moral" for Tagney and Dearing is a synonym of "pro-social." Their views, as I said above, are based on a dualistic separation between mind and behavior, and deeply informed by a clinical practice where shame is often associated to negative symptoms (Dearing and Tangney 2011). The therapeutic aim of reducing suffering offers much to admire, but the overly negative picture of shame it inspires is highly problematic in many ways. Some indication of this is given by Tangney herself, when she remarks that the only people who have no capacity whatsoever for shame are psychopaths, which could indicate a connection between shame and some kind of moral sensibility or consideration for others:

> ... based on our recent research with incarcerated offenders, we suspect that shame may not be all bad, in all contexts. For example, feelings of shame may frequently provoke self-loathing, denial, and defense, but the capacity to experience shame may be preferable to the complete absence of moral emotional experience presumed to be characteristic of psychopaths. In extreme populations, the mere existence of any sort of self-evaluative emotion may offer a ray of hope for rehabilitation and redemption. (Tangney and Stuewig 2004, 327)

But if shame is thus in some way connected to moral sensibility or caring for others, at least to the point of making moral rehabilitation more likely, why should this conclusion only hold for extreme populations? Should one assume that there is some essential difference between incarcerated and non-incarcerated people that makes shame constructive for one group and harmful for the other? The answer would appear to be that in these "extreme populations" the benefits to them and to society at large resulting from reintegration outweigh any damage to their ego or self-worth coming from shame. This at least is the conclusion one gets from combining the above claims with Tangney and Dearing's admission that "shame may in some cases motivate productive soul-searching and revisions of one's priorities and values" in "non-shame-prone, high-ego-strength individuals" (Tangney and Dearing 2004, 126). This admission is based on the results of their studies of non-incarcerated people, most of them American university students. Some soul-searching, therefore, even in the globalizing terms of shame, seems to be constructive if the individual's ego can withstand it, or if the benefits of the whole process end up offsetting the damage to ego. But if this is so according to them, it seems clear that the problem is not shame. Shame is not constructive or destructive *per se*, there are two crucial factors

that make a difference and determine whether shame can be used constructively or not: the individual's ego, or the strength of it, and the surrounding circumstances. Tangney and Dearing, however, do not draw these conclusions: they see these cases as exceptions and pursue their strategy of condemning shame across the board.

Let me now look more carefully at some other major problems entailed by this account. First, Tangney's and Dearing's very rigid definitions of shame and guilt already imply many of the factors they are trying to test in their qualitative research. In particular, the antisocial and destructive nature of shame and the prosocial and constructive nature of guilt are presupposed by and built into their TOSCA (Test Of Self-Conscious Affect) questionnaires, designed to evaluate the proneness of subjects to feel different kinds of "self-conscious affect." They propose situations to the participants and ask them to rate the likelihood that they will react to them in a few different ways (with items that represent, depending on the versions, shame, guilt, detachment, externalization or two different kinds of pride). If one looks at the items, it is not hard to see that those that measure guilt correspond overwhelmingly to appropriate, proportionate and prosocial responses, whereas items measuring shame correspond to exaggerated, inappropriate and antisocial responses (see Ferguson and Stegge 1998; Luyten, Fontaine, and Corveleyn 2002; Giner-Sorolla, Piazza, and Espinosa 2011; Nelissen, Breugelmans, and Zeelenberg 2013, 358). Here are two examples from the TOSCA-3 questionnaire (Tangney and Dearing 2004, 208, 210), together with the two response items that measure, respectively, guilt and shame reactions (the words in brackets are my insertions and identify the self-conscious affect that each item is supposed to be measuring):

> 2. *You break something at work and then hide it*.
> a) You would think: "This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or get someone else to." [Guilt]
> b) You would think about quitting. [Shame] …
>
> 9. *You are driving down the road and you hit a small animal*.
> … b) You would think: "I'm terrible." [Shame]
> … d) You'd feel bad you hadn't been more alert driving down the road. [Guilt]

From this it should be clear that many of the conclusions Tangney and Dearing draw from the questionnaires about the nature of shame and guilt-proneness are built into the responses themselves.

To a very large extent, these biases are a result of their unnuanced emphasis on the separation of self and behavior, and on a concept of self that looks very much like a static nugget of characteristics, which is very problematic. It also seems to assume that we can easily disentangle self and behavior,

and that there is a way of thinking about behavior where the character of the agent is not invested at all. However, this black and white distinction is not very conducive to a refined understanding of these emotions and the underlying structures of self and consciousness. It definitely blurs important nuances that can help us clarify their ethical role. Tangney's own studies (Tangney et al. 1996) have shown that people tend to have trouble distinguishing between shame and guilt (while they find it much easier to distinguish between shame and embarrassment). This, in my view, is not simply due to an error of judgment on the part of the therapists or the clients, as they claim elsewhere (Dearing and Tangney 2011, 9–11). The way they talk about these emotions would almost seem to imply that they are each perfectly distinct, hard-wired processes that produce very different responses, but as we saw in chapter 1, this is dubious in the case of complex emotions. Guilt and shame are in the same emotional territory, they share a vast phenomenal ground, they work together in many ways and, as Bernard Williams (2008) argues, in our current world, it is not possible to understand one without the other. He argues that in a sense guilt can be seen as a refinement and modification of certain areas of the territory of shame, which in his view has not necessarily resulted in a better understanding of ethics or of human nature. Andrew Ortony (1987), for example, claims something similar to this in a very intriguing paper that assumes the distinction between affects and emotions (affective-cognitive hybrids, in Ortony's classification). He claims that all forms of shame (including embarrassment and humiliation) are based on a single affect: the affect he also calls shame. Guilt, however, according to Ortony, is not an emotion, or at least not a single emotion. It is the name we give to a series of different emotional phenomena that are based on different affects, including shame and anger. In his view, the factor that binds all these very different phenomena together is that they are reactions to transgressions of a moral norm. In this view, some forms of guilt would be a cognitive specification of the affect shame, so it wouldn't make sense to oppose them.

Another crucial problem with Tangney and Dearing's conclusions is that their TOSCA test is designed to measure a disposition or a character trait, *proneness* to feel shame or guilt in various situations (with the abovementioned biases in the response items). However, in the subsequent interpretation of results, Tangney and Dearing do not limit their conclusions to these character traits, but they extrapolate them to single instances of these emotions. This is wrong, because, as Nelissen, Breugelmans and Zeelenberg (2013, 359) explain, "much in the same sense that the characteristics of people who are generally, hubristically proud say little about the function of someone being proud about a particular achievement," the disposition to feel shame "is not so informative about the function of situational shame –that is, the shame that someone feels over a particular event." The conclusion of Tangney and Dearing's study should be that people with certain character traits (people who are insecure, or have low self-worth or low ego-strength, for example) are bad at dealing with self-

conscious emotions of self-assessment and tend to elaborate them in destructive ways, not that shame is destructive and guilt is constructive.

Further, as I suggested above, some important elements to determine whether shame will be dealt with in a constructive way or not are contextual. Indeed, De Hooge, Breugelmans and Zeelengber (2010) have found in their empirical studies that shame can and actually *does* lead to prosocial behavior in certain circumstances, namely in dyadic interactions where the partners have witnessed the shameful behavior. If somebody does something shameful in front of us, and we see this person react with shame, our opinion of the offender is likely to be much less negative that if this person acts in an utterly shameless way. This is so because, from a second-person perspective, shame reveals an awareness of and a concern for other people's opinions, as well as for shared norms and standards, which can counter the effects of a previous failing and partially restore other people's trust on the offending individual. This is perfectly consistent with Maibom's (2010) account of shame as descending from a proto-emotion of appeasement.

Tangney and Dearing completely disregard this. They combine their functionalistic understanding of morality (behavior is considered moral when it favors others at the expense of oneself) with an agent-centered take on it, which completely neglects interaction and group dynamics. Actions are judged as morally constructive if, from the agent's own perspective, they are in any measure altruistic or other-regarding, and they are judged as morally counterproductive if the opposite is the case. But in spite of the functionalistic take on morality, no attention whatsoever is paid to other people's perceptions of and reactions to displays of these emotions, or to the intersubjective interactions that ensue. Indeed, one way to put the criticism against Tangney and Dearing is that they are not functionalistic enough in their approach to the ethical roles of shame and guilt. As Nelissen, Breugelmans and Zeelenberg (2013, 361) explain, a look at the dynamics of shame beyond the individual who feels it can shed much light on its contribution to ethical interaction. Dyadic and group dynamics can and do foster prosocial behavior, as shown in the abovementioned study by De Hooge, Breugelmans and Zeelengber (2010), and those tendencies should be part of a functionalistic story about the role of these emotions in ethics.

Finally, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 10–12) take into account another sort of shame, crucial to Aristotle's understanding of it as a semi-virtue, and completely overlooked by Tangney and Dearing, namely 'discretion shame,' *pudor* in Latin and many romance languages, which is a preventive or forward-looking form of shame. This is definitely the emotion Max Scheler (1957) has in mind when he talks about shame protecting our humanity. Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni take the idea from Ancient Greece and call it the "sense of shame": a sense that protects us from getting into shameful situations, that prevents us from being shameless. This type of shame is almost entirely overlooked in

Tangney and Dearing's studies, or only briefly considered as a crippling emotion that disrupts therapy by preventing the patient to open up. However, addressing it in more complexity might give a more balanced and accurate picture of the ways in which shame works in its different varieties. Indeed, Carl Schneider (1977), who is also a therapist, thinks that discretion shame, as a protector of privacy, is indispensable to the formation and maintenance of a healthy sense of self, and in that sense constitutive of our humanity.

The sense of shame is not overlooked, however, in the Neo-Kantian picture that Bernard Williams (2008) so fiercely opposes.[47] The reasons they consider shame to be less moral than guilt have nothing to do with social functions, consequences or action tendencies. The central issues for them are autonomy and altruism, and in this respect the sense of shame is not so different from disgrace shame. In a Neokantian framework, the moral subject is an autonomous self-legislator that deliberates according to the universal laws dictated by his reason. Taking the autonomous self-legislator as the fully developed— and in a sense, only properly moral— subject seems to lead to the inevitable conclusion that shame does not belong in his emotional repertoire. A mature moral agent does not need shame: for him, shame is a nuisance. At least if we conceive shame as a social emotion that makes us evaluate ourselves in terms of what others think of us. Shame thus conceived is a perfect example of heteronomy, and therefore, of moral immaturity. Guilt, however, still in the Neokantian picture, implies a self-evaluation according to the moral law, and therefore it is autonomous and morally mature. But shame has other negative features that make it even worse, morally speaking. With its reduced focus, it implies a selfish concern with my own self, and thus it goes against altruism. And finally, as Leys (2009, 131) remarks, shame blurs responsibility, because it can focus on the involuntary: innate features, things that befall one, and so on, that is, things one is not morally accountable for. If one thinks this way, it is probably no exaggeration to say that shame is, all things considered, an immoral emotion. Is this so? Can shame be defended against these accusations?

SHAME AS ETHICALLY CONSTRUCTIVE

From a liberal or Kantian perspective, is it possible to defend the moral value of shame? To avoid any misunderstandings, let me clarify that I am using the terms 'liberal' or 'Kantian' in a very loose sense: the sense in which most modern Western political and moral thought can be qualified this way, in that to a greater or lesser degree it takes for granted certain concepts of justice, pluralism, freedom or

[47] Two of his most prominent targets are Snell (2012) and Adkins (1970).

autonomy coming from that tradition. The Kantian or liberal suspicion would be that shame can only work as a reliable ethical compass in a relatively homogeneous society where only one substantive conception of the good is at work, as in Homeric Greece. However, in a pluralistic society, one should not accept on mere authority any of the possible conceptions of the good others might have without subjecting them to one's own rational examination. What should count, in the end, is my own assessment. Thus, an emotion that makes me defer to other people's opinions of me is of very limited moral value, and an advocacy of its moral role would amount to an attack on pluralism, a plea for the return to honor code societies.

In spite of this, many liberal authors seem to think that there is something importantly right with the Aristotelian intuition that shame is ethically valuable, even someone who places himself so squarely within the Kantian tradition as John Rawls (1999, para. 67). If Rawls found it fitting and possible to defend shame as valuable in his *A Theory of Justice*, one of the most important works of liberal political thought of the second half of the 20th Century, it should be clear that one need not be a communitarian at heart in order to look at shame with a positive eye. However, Rawls saves shame for pluralism by pushing ethics and shame to the private realm of the individual and keeping them totally separate from the public, political realm of the citizen, of rationality, universality and justice. For him shame has no role in this latter realm: according to his "original position" or "veil of ignorance" thought-experiment, the standpoint one needs to adopt in order to achieve justice as fairness is precisely one that ignores all the particulars of the domain where shame can serve as a guide. For Rawls, shame can act as a guide in the realm of the idiosyncratic values that make each person's life worth living, in the realm of her self-esteem. Shame and the sense of shame can function as guides to the social side of self-esteem, to the extent that self-esteem is sustained and enhanced by social confirmation. But idiosyncratic considerations, situatedness and identity, can only interfere and therefore should be left aside in establishing the conditions for justice, and thus pluralism is safeguarded. He recognizes, then, that shame has a place in human life, because values and self-esteem make life meaningful, but it should play no role in politics and has nothing to do with universality. Rawls, therefore, saves shame for liberalism by pushing it to the private realm of what makes life meaningful. The question here would be whether it is in fact possible to keep ethics, politics and the conditions for justice separated in this way, but the politics of shame are not part of the scope of my project. My point was simply that defending shame does not necessarily make one a communitarian, and that there are liberal ways to find ethical value in shame.

In what follows, I will present three attempts at spelling out what the moral role of shame in our modern Western societies might be. First I will look at accounts that defend the autonomy of shame.

Then I will look at Bernard Williams' criticism of the framework and at his own interpretation of autonomy. Lastly I will look at Cheshire Calhoun's account of moral shame as attached not to the theoretical, heuristic or deliberative, but to the practical side of morality as a collective enterprise carried out with others.

Shame as fully autonomous

For those who accept the Kantian framework as it stands but want to defend shame as a constructive part of it, one of the main strategies has been to analyze shame in order to show that, despite appearances, it is autonomous. This takes us back to the discussions in chapter 1 on whether shame is social or not. Recall that according to Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 21–34), the social claim has three different strands: that shame requires an audience, that it is heteronomous, and that it requires a change of perspective. In chapter 1 I addressed the issue of the audience. In what follows, I discuss various strategies to deny the strand according to which shame is heteronomous. Most accounts that defend the autonomy of shame place great weight on the idea that shame is about self-value. It is about my ego-ideal, my self-esteem or self-respect (Taylor 1985), my self-relevant values (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011).[48] That is what is at stake. But furthermore, it is me, not others, who performs the self-assessment. If having a good reputation is part of who I want to be, I will assign importance to other people's opinions, but it will always be me who judges my reputation to be threatened by what this or that person thinks. There is no heteronomous deferral of authority. This is, in a nutshell, what Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) defend.

Gabriele Taylor's (1985) account is very congenial to that of Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni, who repeatedly quote her approvingly. Criticizing Rawls' (1999, para. 67) account of shame as connected to self-esteem, Taylor links shame to self-respect. For Taylor, shame is not about having a favorable (in the case of high self-esteem) or unfavorable (in the case of low self-esteem) view of oneself: those two attitudes are optional. To have self-respect means to have a sense of one's own worth, and the worth of one's projects, which entails certain expectations. When such expectations are met, I do not necessarily feel better about myself, this does not necessarily improve my opinion of myself, "for if [the subject] thinks of the matter at all he may just think that to behave in such ways or to be so treated is

[48] Scheler's account of course revolves around the idea that "genuine shame is always built upon a feeling of a *positive value of the self*" (Scheler 1987, 37), but given his theory of emotion and value, it seems far-fetched to say he has any Kantian reasons to defend that. The notion of an ego-ideal is obviously Freudian and well-developed in Richard Wollheim's (1999) account in a way that goes against the possibility of a moral articulation in Kantian terms not only of shame, but also of guilt: the moral law is always the Law of the Father, and thus never autonomous.

the least a person can expect, and so is not something to be proud of" (Taylor 1985, 78–79). But if my self-respect is injured or I lose it, if something affects my sense of my own worth, then shame appears (Taylor 1985, 131). Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 118–119) agree with her in linking shame to the subject's values, but they think that there are other values outside of the domain of self-respect and integrity that can cause shame.

As already mentioned in the previous chapter, their account of shame is formulated in terms of self-relevant values: those values that we care to exemplify in our lives, that we are attached to as part of our identities (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, chap. 4). These self-relevant values are not (necessarily) conceptual, they are values that the subject "takes as imposing practical demands on her" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 103). The self that is assessed and at stake in shame is this cluster of self-relevant values, some of which are more central or important than others (therefore, some instances of shame are much more acute than others). Not all values one holds dear are "self-relevant." Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni stress the fact that, for these values to be a part of one's identity, it is not enough to deem them positive or important in general; one has to care to exemplify and reflect them in one's life, they are a source of practical demands (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, chap. 4). One can value good art, for example, and think it important for society that there are good artists in the world, without seeing oneself as an artist. The identity-relevant value for this person could be having discernment for good art (recognizing a good piece when seeing it), whereas artistic creativity would be valued positively, without being identity-relevant. The distinction is crucial, because for Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni (2011, 94–98) shame arises from the perception of an incapacity to exemplify a value one identifies with and cares to reflect in one's life.

This is their definition: "In shame, we apprehend a trait or an action of ours, which we take to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value, as indicating our incapacity to exemplify this self-relevant value even to a minimal degree" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 97).[49] In shame, then, we see ourselves as acquiring an unwanted identity, one that goes directly against a self-relevant value. I feel shame, therefore, when *I* assess that I am not living up to *my own* standards. It is my autonomous assessment of myself that counts. Thus, the person in my example could feel ashamed of making a terribly bad artistic judgment, but not of being unable to produce a work of art. In their view, the reason why it sometimes appears that shame is heteronomous (that I am letting myself be guided by an external opinion when I feel shame in spite of disagreeing with the values implied in the negative

[49] For them, the difference between shame and frustration or self-disappointment lies in the fact that, in shame, one exemplifies the polar opposite of the identity-relevant value, and interprets this as an incapacity to exemplify, even minimally, the said value. In their view, other forms of self-disappointment are less acute, because we don't perceive them as indicating this incapacity. They recognize degrees of exemplification and hierarchies of value importance, which allows them to account for differences in intensity of shame episodes.

assessment of myself) is because people are social animals who (generally) care about their reputation. Having a good reputation and being accepted by peers is very likely to be part of our self-relevant values, and when we are attacked or mocked by others, we can autonomously assess that this value is at risk. But we have other self-relevant values that can still cause shame, without other people's opinions intervening. So, in their account, shame is not structurally about being sensitive to other people's bad opinions of myself, it is about living up to the standards I identify with (which may or may not be social).

Even though I share with Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni the aim of defending shame as valuable in our ethical lives, and agree with many of their analyses and criticisms, I have a major source of disagreement with them, namely their way of construing the self of shame as a cluster of self-relevant values. In chapter 1, I explained the difficulties I see in their way of accounting for some aspects of the phenomenology of shame. Another worry, which stems from the view that the self of shame is constituted by self-relevant values, and which is more significant for the debate at hand, is whether their way of construing the autonomy of shame is satisfactory. I will start with an objection that Calhoun raises in general to accounts that seek to make shame autonomous, which will in turn take me to an objection of the specific way in which Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni build their account.

Calhoun's (2004) objection goes as follows. According to her, accounts of shame as autonomous make it almost impossible to explain the shame that members of oppressed groups feel before the shaming of their oppressors, without implying that the oppressed are complicit in their own oppression on some level, or that they are morally immature or self-alienated, as they let themselves be influenced by external opinions they don't share or deem respectable. This is what Yovel (2003) suggests when he discusses the shame that the novelist Mateo Alemán felt about being a Converso Jew in late 16th C. Spain. The suggestion, using Calhoun's terms, would be that Alemán lived with a conflicted mixture of autonomous critical thinking, immature self-alienation and complicity with his oppression. However, the dubious assumption is that "no rational, mature person who firmly rejects her subordinate social status would feel shame in the face of sexist, racist, homophobic or classist expressions of contempt" (Calhoun 2004, 136), and therefore, those people who do feel it are morally immature. Calhoun thinks this is unacceptable, because it shifts from the aggressor to the victim a substantial part of the responsibility for the suffering caused.

Now, is Calhoun's accusation sound? Is it justified in the case of Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni? Not entirely, or definitely not with the harshness that she presents it.[50] First and foremost, Calhoun does

[50] One should bear in mind however, that her article appeared several years before the book by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, and therefore she could not have been addressing their views. But since she raises a severe

not distinguish between shame and humiliation at all, which is something that Deonna Rodogno and Teroni (2011, 117–18, 232–33) carefully do. She doesn't even mention humiliation in her paper. And this opens up the possibility that what she means by "shame" in these situations is in fact in most cases a feeling of humiliation. Humiliation does not entail endorsing the external assessment imposed on oneself, but rather resisting it as unjustified and undeserved, and thus it does not jeopardize autonomy in any way. Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni plausibly argue that many instances of what Calhoun refers to as shame of the oppressed are actually feelings of humiliation. Still, it is also plausible to think that some people might feel genuine shame in these circumstances. According to Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni's general account of shame, cases of genuine shame in front of a group that condemns us for something we wouldn't normally deem shameful would be a matter of concern for reputation or social acceptance. Shame in these cases would still be autonomous, because reputation or social acceptance can be self-relevant values, and we can autonomously assess that they are threatened. This move seems a little more questionable, particularly since these processes involve stigma and stigmatization, as they argue, and the problem with stigma is not only that it jeopardizes social acceptance, but that it is often insidious and contaminates our values in conflicted ways (see Yovel 2003).

To explore this further, let me look at Chloë FitzGerald's (forthcoming) review essay of Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni's book on shame. In it she argues that their way of construing shame as autonomous does not take into account the possibility that, in certain situations, other people might temporarily influence our self-relevant values and thus make our self-assessment heteronomous. She bases her objection of Taylor's (1985) notion of "false shame." As an example, FitzGerald describes an everyday case where, in the office, she is ashamed to admit in front of her colleagues that she shops in a discount supermarket, and so lies to them about the place where she bought some dried fruit mix. But later, back home with her partner, she tells him about the lie and feels ashamed of having allowed her concern for reputation to override other values that are more central to her (that people's worth is not measured by the size of their pockets, for instance).

Now, Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni would say that in her initial shame in the office, her self-assessment, according to which her reputation was at stake if she revealed the truth, was autonomous. Even if reputation is a peripheral value that is only fleetingly exaggerated, it still is her value, and thus autonomy is not threatened. The value stems (is a part of) herself. FitzGerald, however, thinks that this simply does not do justice to the conflicted nature of these cases, and argues that a concern for reputation can and sometimes does threaten one's autonomy. Indeed, her story makes it clear that for

and important ethical worry in relation with views of shame as autonomous, and their view is one such, I believe the question can be asked of them.

a fleeting moment it felt as if she assented to the value that shopping at a discount supermarket was shameful. And surely when we let others impose their values on us we often fleetingly feel as if we endorsed them too. Indeed, I struggle to see what else heteronomy would mean, if not that a concern for reputation (or something else we care about) pushes us to temporarily uphold alien values. FitzGerald (forthcoming, sec. 2) thinks it is misleading to present the issue as if the two only existing options were unmixed autonomy and unmixed heteronomy. She proposes a third option:

> … that the autonomy of shame comes in degrees; it is sometimes autonomous – when the values are fully the subject's own -, sometimes heteronomous - when the subject takes on the values of others temporarily because she cares about her reputation - and can be any one of a number of shades that fall between the two poles. This option is the best suited to cover complex but common cases, such as *office*, where a subject is influenced by the opinions of others and struggles over what she really does value.

If this is true, then the role of shame in our ethical lives cannot hinge on it always embodying our autonomy.

Blurring the Kantian boundaries

The strategy that Bernard Williams (2008) adopts is very different from the previous one. He does not focus his criticism on any of the attempts to account for shame as autonomous along the lines of the authors presented on the previous section, but many of his objections apply to them as well. Williams' goal is to defend the ethical value of shame by first dismantling the Neokantian assumptions that lead to its dismissal, i.e., by blurring the Kantian boundary between morality and ethics. Williams' criticism of these assumptions applies to authors who have the kind of goals and employ the kind of strategies reviewed in the previous section, precisely because their attempt is to bring shame into the morality framework without criticism. For Williams, the morality framework is flawed and this is the reason why shame, an ethically valuable emotion, is difficult to fit within it. If one agrees with Williams, any attempt at bringing shame into the framework as it is must, therefore, fail.

Williams (2008) starts with the opposition between guilt and shame, where guilt is autonomous, and therefore morally productive, and shame is heteronomous, and therefore morally counterproductive. The distinction may appear neat and plausible, but, as we have already seen to some extent, things are much more complicated. One of the undesirable consequences of this way of seeing things, one that Williams particularly deplores, is that it leads to the view that the ethical outlook of the Ancient Greeks,

of Homer and Sophocles, was immature, underdeveloped, and somewhat childish. And this, in his view, cannot be right. Indeed, the problem generalizes to any moral culture that is not centered on the notions of duty, autonomy and guilt, which, in Williams' view, is essentially a product of cultural and theoretical prejudice. This picture is based on the assumptions that the moral subject is characterless (because it is purely rational, and reason is universal), and guided by self-imposed universal principles and laws that are unaffected by things such as individual identity and situatedness. Again, the keys are autonomy, universality and altruism. Guilt seems compatible with all of them, shame does not. It is no overstatement to say that one of the main aims of Williams' whole philosophical endeavor is to combat and dismantle this notion of a characterless moral subject and champion the importance of character and individual identity for ethics. Williams' strategy has two fronts: firstly, showing that shame and guilt do not work according to the Neokantian characterization, and secondly, thereby criticizing the idea that the assumptions of the morality framework are best able to account for our ethical lives, or serve as guides in them.

First, it is not so clear that only shame and not guilt includes a potentially heteronomous reference to others that judge us. Historically, guilt is not part of our Greek heritage: Ancient Greece has largely been considered as a shame culture, which did not possess the concept of "guilt" as a moral emotion (see Dodds 2004; Williams 2008). Guilt comes from our Judeo-Christian heritage, where the notion is indissolubly tied to the ideas of sin and law (in the Old Testament, God is depicted as a judge and executor of punishments). As opposed to shame, guilt is from its origins and in all instances always clearly linked to morality and to action, it is about the violation of a law, be it God's command or, in its later, modern, version, a norm of duty. In a move with clear Freudian overtones, Williams (2008, 219–223, Appendix I) claims that the source of *both* shame and guilt is an internalized figure, which in shame is an observer or a witness, and in guilt is a victim or a judge (for example, God). Richard Wollheim's (1999) Freudian account of these emotions construes them both as the result of different kinds of indictments by the super-ego. In this sense, both emotions would be equally heteronomous. This, for Williams, does not disqualify them as sources of ethical guidance. In fact, a certain degree of heteronomy, or put another way, a certain degree of appreciation of other people's situated moral judgments, is a very good thing. It is something that makes us more, not less, morally mature, because reason has its limits and moral truth is indeterminate:

> But if we now think, plausibly enough, that the power of reason is not enough by itself to distinguish good and bad; if we think yet more plausibly, that even if it is, it is not very good at making its effects indubitably obvious, then we should hope that there is some limit to these people's autonomy, that there is an internalized other in them that carries some *genuine social*

> *weight. Without it, the convictions of autonomous self-legislation may become hard to distinguish from an insensate degree of moral egoism*. (Williams 2008, 100, my emphasis)

Giving weight to the opinions of others is not incompatible with critical thinking and discernment: it is often a result and an enhancement of them.

What, according to Williams' interpretation, Neokantian accounts of guilt do is bring the internalized judge so close to the self that both become indistinguishable. The judge's voice thus starts to be understood as an abstract moral law that springs from the very self, who therefore turns out to be her own judge. In this way guilt comes to be understood merely as a response to the transgression of a moral norm, and it loses its significant reference to the victim, who thus becomes only one element in the narrative of my transgression. This (abstracting away others whose opinion we respect, abstracting away the relevant others that have been harmed) is ethically suspect, i.e., egocentric and potentially leading to "an insensate degree of moral egoism," and it is something that guilt does, but shame does not do, according to Williams.

Shame, for Williams, always contains a reference to real concrete others. As I said in chapter 1, it is not that these others have to be present or even pictured in one's imagination, it is rather that shame always points towards the world I want to live in and its expectations of me (Williams 2008, 84). To illustrate this, Williams employs the tragedy of *Ajax* by Sophocles, and quotes Ajax' suicide speech, where the Greek hero wonders how he can face his father after covering himself in shame (Williams 2008, 85; Sophocles, *Ajax*, 462 seq.). This is not a purely rhetorical device. It expresses Ajax' awareness that the things that we do and do not do impact on who we are, that the world has certain expectations that must be fulfilled in order for us to have and retain certain identities. In Ajax' case, the monologue expresses that if he cannot command the respect of his father and men of similar worth and accomplishments, he cannot keep his identity as an honorable warrior, or his self-respect. Now, Williams does not want to do away with the idea of autonomy entirely, insofar as it is tied to a discerning critical stance. Thus, his way of reconciling autonomy with the social nature of shame is as follows. Shame does contain a reference to the world I want to live in, but not everyone in it has the capacity to elicit my shame: in Williams' view, people I consider inferior and I despise typically have a significantly reduced power to elicit shame in me. It is typically people I respect, like Ajax's father in the previous example, who are a part of the world to which I refer and have the power to shame me. According to Williams (2008, 82–89), there is a degree of autonomy in the choice of the audience that can shame me. Because of the reasons I exposed in the previous paragraph, giving respected others the power to shame us, even in the cases in which we do not share their opinions, is a sign of good moral

discernment, not the opposite. It is a recognition of the limits of my reason and the need for the help of others.

Secondly, there is the important issue of responsibility (see Williams 2008, chap. 3). In defending why guilt is more morally mature than shame, researchers like Tangney, Dearing and Leys accord great importance to the fact that guilt appropriately attaches only to voluntary actions and omission and not to other aspects of the self. This is crucial in the morality system, because justice and rationality prevent us from attributing responsibility to people for things that are beyond their control: accidents, involuntary reactions, and inevitable forms of coercion should remain outside of the domain of moral judgment. Feeling guilty about them would then be nonsensical and irrational. However, in Williams' view, the conclusion that feeling guilty in those situations would be irrational does not necessarily follow. Recognizing that any attribution of responsibility and blame ought to be sensitive to degrees of voluntariness or intent does not entail that feeling guilty about involuntary harms caused by oneself is irrational. In fact, we can and do recognize responsibility for things that we did not intend to do or cause and that were beyond our control—this is one of the reasons why responsibility and blame can be separated. What can it mean to say that it is *irrational* to feel guilty for having involuntarily killed a child in a car accident? (Williams 2008, 93). The fact remains that I caused severe harm to someone, whether I intended to do it or not, and this might be enough to appropriately feel a measure of guilt.

The key to understand this, as Williams is ready to point out, is that the border between the voluntary and the involuntary in human action is often blurry and difficult to trace precisely. Furthermore, on a case by case basis, it is not so clear that ethics only requires us to take responsibility for strictly voluntary actions. What counts as involuntary? What level of coercion would be necessary, for example, to exempt one of responsibility from certain atrocious deeds? A good example of the complications and nuances of this type of cases, and of the vital importance of getting the answers to these impossible questions right, is Primo Levi's (1989, chap. 2) extraordinary analysis of the "grey zone" of the Holocaust: the prisoners that in one way or another collaborated with the Nazis in the camps or the ghettos across Europe. One of the crucial issues that, according to Williams, discussions of the voluntary and involuntary in the Neokantian framework ignore is the identity of the agent, what the Greeks thought of as character. In his own words, "we know that in the story of one's life there is an authority exercised by what one has done, and not merely by what one has intentionally done" (Williams 2008, 69). He is not denying that there is a difference between doing something intentionally and doing it unintentionally. There *is* an important difference, but it application is complex, because on the one hand, these states are not pure and mutually exclusive. Many cases are blurry, as we saw above, and voluntariness comes in degrees. On the other hand, his claim is that doing

something, even unintentionally, has an impact on who I am, and its ethical import can only be understood from the perspective of who I am. Law should probably not punish us for mostly involuntary actions, but from this it certainly does not follow that our emotions ought not put us in touch with the values at stake. As the tragedy of Oedipus shows, some thoroughly involuntary deeds leave a permanent mark on who one is (Williams 2008, 67–71). In Williams' view, shame, unlike guilt in its Neokantian interpretation, makes sense of this. Shame helps us "understand how a certain action or thought stands to ourselves, to what we are and to what realistically we can want ourselves to be," and this reference to moral character and self-identity that guilt lacks is why "shame can understand guilt, but guilt cannot understand itself" (Williams 2008, 93).

Giving weight to other people's opinions as a sign of moral maturity

The last example I would like to give of ways of accounting for the moral import of shame is Cheshire Calhoun's (2004). She agrees with Williams on many issues, but ultimately finds his account unsatisfactory. For her, it is absolutely crucial to emphasize that a fully morally developed and autonomous subject (the explicit emphasis on autonomy in her case is much more marked than in Williams) can feel ashamed by opinions she disagrees with: the fact that shame is social in a strong sense is not at odds with autonomy. Autonomy has nothing to do with, and is therefore unaffected by, shame, because both operate at different levels of morality. Autonomy operates at the deliberative level, while shame operates at the practical level of concrete interaction with others. And in Calhoun's view, neither trying to do away with the social character of shame nor trying to reconcile sociality and autonomy in the way that Williams does, allow us to produce a successful account of moral shame. In her opinion, both strategies turn out not to be so different, because Williams ultimately does not account for the social character of shame (or for the social dimension of selfhood) satisfactorily.

Calhoun criticizes Williams for not going far enough, for mentioning, but not giving any real social weight to others, for not being actually able to account for the true power of others to shame us, even when we disagree with them. According to her, his claim that we have some power to choose the audience that can shame us is not so different from saying that in shame I am my own judge, that ultimately the only evaluation at play is my own evaluation of myself. For on which grounds do I choose the respected others that can shame me? Does it not all come down to me doing the choosing after all? Do I not choose in virtue of some values I respect and that they embody? Indeed, the Ajax example reinforces this impression, since the heroic honor code that his father embodies is precisely Ajax's own code. And what if those respected others were to disgracefully betray the values for which I

respect them? Would I not withdraw my respect and the power to shame? (Calhoun 2004, 134–135). It is doubtful that we can actually do this, that the power to shame aligns neatly with respect for a certain person or group. The problem with such accounts is, for Calhoun, a moral and political one: if we try to rescue autonomy by emphasizing that the subject must endorse the negative assessment or respect of the person issuing it in order to feel shame, we end up shifting onto victims and oppressed groups the blame for the shame they feel in the face of abuses by their oppressors. We make it look as if the victims were either colluding with their aggressors or morally immature (see Calhoun 2004, 135). This cannot be right, she claims. When female or black students feel ashamed in the face of sexist or racist remarks by their professors, as is the case in several of her examples, this is not (or at least not necessarily, and not in most cases) a sign of their moral immaturity. Quite the opposite: "Rather than signaling a failure to sustain their own positive views of themselves, their shame instead signals their capacity to take seriously fellow participants in their social world" (Calhoun 2004, 138).

What does it mean, then, "to take seriously fellow participants in their social world" so that they have the power to shame us? One thing is clear: it does *not* mean endorsing their views on any level. The key for Calhoun is that "social weight" is *not* an epistemic notion; it is rather a practical notion, a consequence of sharing our practices of morality with other people. She writes:

> Moral theories are typically slanted toward moral epistemology, and this induces us to think that "weight" must be an epistemic notion. ... The assumption that weight is an epistemic notion then drives us toward the idea that for others' opinions to have "weight" is for those opinions to have weight *in our reasoning process*. But if they weigh in our reasoning process, we must have accepted their truth.
>
> Moral agents, however, are not just knowers. They are also participants in various social practices of morality with other people. What I want to suggest is that the "weight" central to shame is not an epistemic notion. It is instead the "weight" that other people have for us when we acknowledge them as fellow social participants. That an other's view of us has weight in this latter sense is compatible with denying its truth. (Calhoun 2004, 139)

The opinions of people with whom we share a social practice of morality, our co-participants in that practice, have the power to shame us, according to Calhoun, because of their practical weight, i.e., because they affect our lives and social identities in very concrete ways. The world whose expectations I betray does not have to be a world of respected others whose moral values I share, like in Williams' example of Ajax. Co-participants, Calhoun explains, are more than mere agents ("responsible beings, open to reason, and capable of exhibiting good will"), whose opinions we take seriously by listening to

them and engaging in dialogue with them. "Co-participants are more than this ... [They] are part of a moral "we" that shares a social practice of morality" (Calhoun 2004, 140). As such, their opinions are taken seriously in a more substantive way, because they have a say in the creation, upholding and interpretation of the norms that regulate the social practice in question. This is different from Williams' account (at least from Calhoun's rendering of it) in that, crucially, we do not choose the group because we admire or respect its values, but because there is something else we want to do together: we choose a profession, or a religion, or form a family, and find ourselves immersed in already existing social practices of morality.

Not everybody within a practice shares the same evaluative standards: there is room for disagreement within the group. So two co-participants may disagree, with both still remaining part of the same practice. According to Calhoun (2004, 140–141), "shaming criticisms work by impressing upon the person that she has disappointed not just one individual's expectations but what some "we" expected of her," so the opinions of co-participants can shame us when they are seen as expressing a representative viewpoint within that practice, as telling us who we are for a number of co-participants. This has a definite, inescapable impact on our moral identities, because, first, such identities are not determined decisively by our own self-conceptions, others have a say in this; and second, our moral practices are not freely chosen, but come as a part of the social practices we choose (or I may add, are born into). One of the consequences of this structure is that it gives disproportionate shaming power to those in positions of authority, as their opinions are typically seen as much more representative. But this, unfortunately, is simply one of the consequences of being social animals that engage in social practices.

Heidi Maibom, who gives an account of shame as evolutionarily descending from a proto-emotion of appeasement linked to group status, agrees with Calhoun that shame is relevant for the interactive, not the deliberative aspect of morality, but she makes two observations. First, that the structure Calhoun proposes extends to other areas of our social practices and public identities, since not all shame inducing failure is moral, but it all implies giving weight to the opinions of other co-participants in our social practices (Maibom 2010, 576). This could be a way of cashing out what Williams means when he says that shame contains a reference to the world in which I live or I would have to live in. The second observation, however, is a criticism of the way in which Calhoun interprets the disproportionate shaming power of high-ranking individuals. In Maibom's view, this increased power is not a function of their representativeness, of the number of co-participants that share their opinion. If this were so, any other member of the majority subgroup would have the same shaming power as the authority figure, which is clearly not the case. It is rather that rank simply confers a disproportionate ability to dictate norms and impact on the status of other individuals within the group. In any case, the answer to this

power imbalance, according to Calhoun (2004, 144–146), is not to urge the oppressed to become thick-skinned and invulnerable to shaming, i.e., more autonomous in their judgments: oppressed people are as rationally autonomous as anyone else can be, but rational autonomy, despite the Stoic ideal, cannot and does not make one completely invulnerable to aggression and social rejection. The answer to these situations is rather to recognize the weight of opinions we disagree with as part and parcel of what it means to share a moral practice, and use our critical thinking and reasoning to reform the oppressive (majority, representative or authoritative) viewpoints that impose deformed identities on people.

Calhoun's strategy to save the autonomy of oppressed minorities is therefore to keep it separate from shame and give shame a different ethical role. When one is shamed for belonging to an oppressed group, one might deny the truth of the insulting remark, one might deny that the minority one belongs to actually has that negative trait, or deny that being a part of that group is a shameful thing, and still recognize the negative impact that such evaluations by others have in one's public identities, the power they have in shaping the world one will have to live in. That impact is real, and acknowledging it amounts to acknowledging a fact about the world and about our public identities, but it does not thereby imply that our capacity for autonomous judgment is compromised. I can recognize the practical weight of the *is* without assenting to the validity of the *ought*. Indeed, keeping the two separate, the keen sensitivity to the impact of other people's opinions (shame) and a critical autonomous judgment, might be important to fuel and sustain emancipatory fights with strategies such as pride parades, which seek to re-appropriate and rehabilitate shameful identities (see Sedgwick and Frank 2003, 38; Sedgwick 1993, 4; and comments on these texts by Leys 2009, 128–29).

One may wonder, however, if it is true that the realms of shame and autonomy are so independent from each other. As I remarked above in my general discussion of ethics and emotions, it is not clear what role reason can play if it is radically divorced from affectivity and value. The motivation for Calhoun to propose such a sharp distinction is clearly political: she wants an account that makes sense of our capacity to resist, criticize and fight shaming discourses, and that does not diminish the moral strength of oppressed individuals who feel shame under oppression. But if she wants a complete picture of what resisting oppression and caving in to it amounts to as far as shame is concerned, an important problem with her account is that she works as if the feeling of shame were the only element at play. But in my comparisons of shame to disgrace and humiliation various possibilities of resisting shame came to the fore. As Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 226–43) remark two other notions that Calhoun overlooks need to be considered in these cases:

humiliation and stigma.[51] Distinguishing shame from the feeling of humiliation can do part of the work of saving the autonomy of oppressed minorities. In fact, acknowledging the practical impact of someone else's negative evaluation but refusing to ascribe any normative weight to it is precisely what we do when we feel humiliated, when we feel unjustifiably attacked, accused, offended or put down in the eyes of others; and humiliation tends to be the more common response to shaming. Indeed, for a discerning adult, it might be the most appropriate response. But the moment one transitions into shame, one seems to be appropriating the negative evaluation on some level, this is why shame is considered an emotion of *self*-assessment. Because this transition into shame happens often, it is important to also look at stigmatization processes and be aware of their insidiousness, of their capacity to infiltrate our values and contaminate our autonomy. It should be noted, however, that the transition need not always be from humiliation to shame. As Morgan (2008) argues, shame can prompt us to examine our relations to others, and thus motivate a transition from shame to humiliation.

However, I agree with FitzGerald that it is not possible to clearly determine whether the self-assessment of shame is autonomous or heteronomous in all cases. It seems to me that responding to shaming with shame instead of humiliation might sometimes be an expression of autonomy, such as when somebody publicly accused accepts her responsibility and shame.[52] But some other times it might reflect the collapse or contamination of autonomy under pressure: Mateo Alemán as described by Yovel (2003) might be one such ambivalent case. As FitzGerald (forthcoming) argues, autonomy and heteronomy come in degrees, and shame is a phenomenon where this becomes particularly clear.

All of the above leads us in the general direction that Williams, Calhoun and Maibom seem to want to take in some way or another: that ethical considerations and the reasons why they matter to us do not circumscribe themselves to the domain of rational autonomy understood in the idealized Kantian

[51] Thanks to Fabrice Teroni for raising this issue.

[52] A representative example comes to mind. After the tragic train bombings perpetrated in Madrid by an Al-Qaeda cell on 11 March 2004, only 3 days before a national election, a parliamentary investigation commission was established to look into the circumstances in which this unprecedented attack took place, and specifically into the actions of the Spanish government and police before and after the attack. Its sessions were open to the public and broadcasted on Spanish national TV. The most moving and provoking of them all was the one where Pilar Manjón, the main representative of the victims, whose teenage son was killed in one of the bombed trains, spoke before the commission. She accused its members, all of them elected representatives of the Spanish people, of having used the attacks and the victims' suffering to their own political and electoral ends, and of having turned the investigation into a frivolous partisan fight, where the suffering of victims was entirely disregarded. Her discourse deeply impacted the Spanish public and entirely changed the atmosphere in which sessions were taking place. In their response to her, all party representatives gave signs that her words had hit a nerve. Some tried to save some face and respond in a cold and composed (in one case, slightly callous) manner, but there were many of them who fully took on board the accusations and explicitly asked for pardon. At least one of them, as far as I can remember, confessed to being ashamed of himself. If this shame was genuine, as it certainly seemed to be, I would interpret it as autonomous.

sense. The ethical realm extends beyond the realm of morality in the narrow sense. In order to understand the ethical value of shame, we need to look further from what he called the territory of morality and apply a wider, ethical, gaze. It seems to me that, if the passages where he talks about the alleged capacity to choose our shaming audience seem to put Williams on the side of those who think of shame as a private self-evaluation, there is also much in the book to suggest that he would be very sympathetic to the more social and practical aspects of Calhoun's and Maibom's accounts. A crucial idea for all of them, in one form or another, is that our identities are not determined by our self-concept: there is a crucial social side to them, they are intrinsically situated. Shame attests to this, to what Lisa Guenther (2012, 71) calls "irreducible relationality," and the moral role of the emotion is connected to this.

MORAL AND NON-MORAL SHAME

At this point I would like to come back to my initial question: what is the connection between shame and ethics? According to the accounts I reviewed above, the connection of shame to morality seems to be a relatively contingent one, because 'the shameful' is not necessarily or primarily a moral category, but it seems rather to be connected to our self-concept or to our social identities. John Rawls (1999, para. 67), for example, distinguishes between natural shame (shame of our traits or lack of abilities, for example) and moral shame (shame related to moral failings or lack of virtues). According to him, it is possible, therefore, for the shame experience not to have any ethical relevance whatsoever. Calhoun (2004) seems to leave this possibility open by speaking consistently of "moral shame." She does not explicitly postulate different kinds, but her consistent use of the adjective seems to indicate that she thinks it necessary to specify. Maibom (2010, 576) certainly finds it relevant to point out that shame-inducing failure is not always moral. Cohen (2003, 1083–84) distinguishes primal shame (the shame of being dishonored that is frequent in honor cultures) from moral shame, and mentions the possibility of many other distinctions. Shame, therefore, could be moral or non-moral, depending on its secondary object, i.e., depending on its cause or trigger. It would seem, then, that only after we have been introduced to ethics can the feeling of shame acquire a moral significance. This should come as no surprise in view of Ronald de Sousa's claim about moral emotions: "those sentiments only earn the qualifier 'moral' when they have been elaborated and integrated into the moral code of a social group, where stable and universalizable principles replace the inevitably changeable impulses of momentary sentiment" (de Sousa 2001, 119).

In this sense, the accounts I have dealt with so far in this chapter seem to imply that subjects of moral shame are fully developed moral persons, which means that rather highly cognitive structure must be in place for there to be moral shame. They seem to imply reflective self-consciousness, a developed self-concept, and some normative capacities, such as the ability to understand some norms, standards or ideals and measure oneself up against them. The selfhood that is at stake in these accounts is one that emerges as a result of self-reflective self-consciousness, one that is linked to a self-concept and to our social and narrative identities. Now, does this hold of all accounts examined? Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni resist the idea that their account is so cognitively demanding since, for them, self-relevant values are not conceptual, they are simply values that the subject "takes as imposing practical demands on her" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 103). However, it is questionable whether the fine discriminations involved in an individual's taking "a trait or an action of hers to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value" or recognizing "the incapacity to exemplify, even minimally, this value" are equally non-demanding.

Be this as it may, for most accounts the question of the link between moral shame and other types of shame still holds, because there is a considerable gap regarding the ways in which they are formulated. Reddy (2008, chap. 7), for example, as discussed, gives her account of the onset of self-conscious emotion in terms of interaction and a sense of self that depends on the face to face encounter. According to her, the first signs of shame, or proto-shame, in infants, require, of course, pre-reflective self-consciousness (tacit capacity to discriminate self from environment) and a capacity to detect the other's attention as directed to oneself, but no self-concept and no notion of normativity seem to be necessary. Experiential selfhood and the experiential recognition of another seem to be enough. A similar conclusion arises from Heidi Maibom's (2010) investigation of the descent of shame.

How do these simpler experiences relate to moral shame? Many must have thought there was a significant relation, since shame has often been regarded as especially conducive to moral learning, as in Aristotle (see Burnyeat 1980), and it is frequently used for education purposes (see Heller 2003, 1024), as a tool to instil social and moral norms. In this sense, shame has even been called the "midwife" and the "condition of possibility" of any human education (Ferlosio 2000, 29). Calhoun's approach, for instance, could be developed into a way of understanding this connection, by locating the relevance of shame on the more practical and interactive aspects of morality, where its value is to be found in its attesting to a certain degree of awareness and care for the opinions of others. Sensitivity to approval or disapproval by others implies what Reddy (2008, 149) calls self-other-consciousness, awareness of oneself in a relation with another, but that is a much simpler requirement than a fully developed self-concept. It could be said that autonomy can only be achieved by living, interacting, communicating with, trusting and relying on others, and shame is an important part of that. In my next

chapter, I explore some accounts of shame in the phenomenological tradition (notably those offered by the early Emmanuel Lévinas and Jean-Paul Sartre), which do not focus on assessment, values or normativity, but on intra- and interpersonal relations and intersubjectivity, looking for a way of understanding how the experience(s) of shame, even in simpler forms, may connect to ethical learning and understanding.

CHAPTER 3
DIVING DEEP INTO THE SHAME EXPERIENCE: SELF-ACQUAINTANCE AND HUMAN RELATIONALITY

In my previous chapter, I reviewed some accounts of shame as a moral emotion, with two main approaches standing out: the functionalist approach, where emotions are considered *moral* emotions when they foster prosocial behavior or responses, and the normative approach, where the issue is rather whether emotions contribute to a person's autonomy or otherwise put her in touch with ethical values. As they stand, most accounts of moral shame I reviewed presuppose a self-concept and some relatively developed normative capacities; they presuppose a certain understanding of ethics before the phenomenon of shame can attach to moral objects. But as I also mentioned in framing and concluding chapter 2, there are other accounts that seem to imply that things are the other way around: we learn to be moral partially through shame. If that were true, would it indicate that there is a connection between simpler forms of shame and ethics? Does that have any impact on the status of shame as a moral emotion? In order to explore this question, a careful phenomenological analysis of the experience will be helpful. Phenomenologists such as Sartre (1972) and the early Lévinas (2003) have investigated shame carefully in more morally neutral terms, although Lévinas (1980) later put forward an account of shame in thoroughly ethical terms, tying it to his idea of the face of the other and the infinite responsibility it calls forth. Their exploration is the basis for some accounts that locate the ethical value of shame at a more basic level, by linking it indissolubly to humanity, by defending that shame attests to the human in each subject (Agamben 1999; Guenther 2011; Guenther 2012). These accounts focus on the self-relation and on intersubjective relationality to others as structural features of our experience, and in so doing, they try to locate the link to ethics at this structural level.

Giorgio Agamben, for one, defends that shame points to an ethics that comes *before* good and evil, to a territory of indistinction between victim and perpetrator: shame for Agamben (1999, 128) is "the hidden structure of all subjectivity and consciousness," a moment when desubjectification reveals the subject. Criticizing him in a Lévinasian spirit, Lisa Guenther (2012, 61–62) argues that what shame points to is not to a solipsistic movement of the subject that resists its own annihilation, but to the indissolubility of our relation to others. That—relationality and openness to the other—is the only way in which, according to her, it makes sense to interpret humanity as a sort of universal. And shame for her attests to that relationality. Even though they disagree on this fundamental aspect, Agamben's and Guenther's approaches have some things in common, which are opposed to the authors I presented in the previous chapter. Neither of them focuses on how shame is governed by values and

norms, nor on how it regulates behavior and marks action tendencies, but instead, drawing from the phenomenological tradition, look for structural features of the shame-experience that make it ethically meaningful. While Agamben draws on Holocaust testimonies and, philosophically, on the early Lévinas and Heidegger (who did not address shame in his writings), Guenther draws extensively on Sartre and Lévinas, both of whom developed important accounts of shame. This chapter is divided in two main parts. In the first, I present Lévinas' take on shame in his early essay *On Escape*, followed by the account of shame that Agamben derives from this text. I then move on to the second part, where I present Sartre's richer account, and I elaborate it by drawing on Jonathan Webber (2011), who articulates Sartre's account in terms of bad faith, and Stanley Cavell (1995), who links it to love and recognition in his reading of Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The final section of this chapter is a discussion of *King Lear* that follows Cavell's lead in order to test and criticize Webber's hypothesis on Sartre.

"Being riveted to oneself": shame in the early Lévinas

The first analysis of shame offered by Emmanuel Lévinas can be found in his essay *On Escape*, which appeared in 1936. In this essay, Lévinas goes through a series of phenomenological analyses of need, pleasure, shame and nausea, to unveil the fundamental insufficiency at the heart of the human condition (Lévinas 2003, 126). According to Lévinas, human need, or indigence, is not to be understood as contingent lack, as a void that asks to be filled and can be filled so that one's being may regain its plenitude. Need is fundamental and structural, it reveals our being as finite and essentially insufficient. The phenomena that Lévinas analyzes here do not reveal occurrent gaps to be refilled; they reveal the total and solid presence of a fundamentally insufficient being. The satisfaction of specific needs and desires or the enjoyment of specific pleasures cannot and does not diminish in any way this insufficiency. And therefore, it would seem that the only way to overcome it is to escape from our being.

Shame is therefore understood in this first Lévinasian account as one of the key phenomena that disclose to oneself this structural insufficiency. The analysis progresses from a level where there is an explicit self-representation, something that could be described as an explicit comparison and mismatch between my actual self and my ego-ideal (an idea I have explored in previous chapters), to a deeper structural level where the key phenomenological feature is the impossibility of escaping from oneself, the impossibility of ceasing to be the insufficient being that one is. This is his first "superficial" (in his own words) approach:

> [Shame] is the representation we form of ourselves as diminished beings with which we are pained to identify. Yet shame's whole intensity ... consists precisely in our inability not to identify with this being who is already foreign to us and whose motives for acting we can no longer comprehend ... (Lévinas 2003, 63)

His first description of shame therefore links it to moral failings, to sin, to motives for acting: we are still in the third-personal realm of the conventional and the normative, in the realm of judgment that I addressed in the previous chapter. But right away Lévinas disconnects shame from transgressions or violations of norms; shame does not depend on our being "inasmuch as it is liable to sin, but rather on the very being of our being, on its incapacity to break with itself" (Lévinas 2003, 63). The feeling of shame is not about being inadequate or unable to fit into a set paradigm, it is not about a gap we can fill in or a flaw we can fix, it is about our fundamental insufficiency, lack and vulnerability. The paradigm is nakedness insofar as it can function as a symbol of this lack, nakedness as a state of being:

> [Shameful nakedness] is that one seeks to hide from the others, but also from oneself … What appears in shame is thus precisely the fact of being riveted to oneself, the radical impossibility of fleeing oneself to hide from oneself, the unalterably binding presence of the I to itself. (Lévinas 2003, 64)

This strong urge to escape combined with the utter impossibility of doing so, because one is riveted, is what Lévinas finds more characteristic of the phenomenology of shame. We wish to deny that we are that faulty and wretched being, we want to distance ourselves from it and disidentify with it, but we cannot, because that is what we are, that is our being, so we feel riveted to it. Such a feeling, though often interpreted in different terms, has been taken as characteristic of shame by virtually every author who deals with this emotion: the wish to hide, disappear, sink through the ground, as well as its expression in the slumped bodily posture, the averted gaze, the avoidance of contact with others, etc. Karlsson and Sjöberg (2009) describe the temporal structure of the experience as the feeling of a "frozen now," where one is riveted to the shameful moment, and one's future possibilities disappear from view. Lévinas' image of "being riveted to oneself" is one of the most powerful descriptions of the phenomenon: in shame, I want to be other than I am, to stop identifying with that fragile being, but I become painfully aware that this is impossible, that I am it, that I can never escape from it. Shame, therefore, reveals to me my inescapable situatedness, my first-personal being embodied and indigent, as I explained in chapter 1 in making sense of how shame attaches to the "whole self."

As I will explain in detail later on, this feeling of fundamental insufficiency is, according to Stanley Cavell (1995, 280), what triggered the tragedy of King Lear, his desperate endeavors to escape.

Another perfect illustration of this is the passage from Virginia Woolf's *The New Dress* that I quoted in chapter 1: the inexorableness and inescapability of Mabel Waring's shame are obvious from the start, and become even more obvious as the story progresses and the description of her shame deepens. Mabel is trapped with no escape from herself: leaving the party will not do, and indeed, it does not do when she leaves at the end of the story. Her leaving simply makes more conspicuous the fact that her self is shameful. From the moment she takes off her coat and the suspicion that "something is not right" takes hold of her, she is naked in front of herself, her indigent being is in full view. Her presence to herself is inescapable, and any effort to escape makes this more evident. There is nowhere to go where our being will not follow. We are riveted to ourselves.

According to Lévinas, "it is ... our intimacy, that is, *our presence to ourselves*, that is shameful" (Lévinas 2003, 65), and that is the key to shame. Whatever the source of any judgment of inadequacy, whatever its causes or the norms that govern it, shame reveals to me my fundamental insufficiency and vulnerability, an insufficiency that no elegant dress, no royal cloak can cover indefinitely. This is a discovery nobody else could make but oneself, a discovery that is no such discovery for an external observer. Nobody but me could feel riveted when realizing that I am *this* being, *this* body, *this* person, nobody else *is* riveted to it. Shame, in this view, involves a sense of alienation and simultaneously an impossibility to be other, an indissoluble self-relation. Shame is about the disclosure of this lack, this "fundamental insufficiency in the human condition." That realization is at the heart of King Lear's tragedy, as I will show later in this chapter, when I use Cavell (1995) to illuminate and deepen Sartre's (1969) account of shame. And Lear's crazed attempt to escape throughout the play only deepened his shame more, as Lévinas' image of being riveted suggests.

ETHICISING HUMAN INSUFFICIENCY: AGAMBEN ON SHAME AS THE HIDDEN STRUCTURE OF SUBJECTIVITY

Giorgio Agamben (1999) finds this description of the indissoluble relation of the self to itself in shame crucial and enormously compelling. So much so that he makes this Lévinasian analysis into the cornerstone of the "new ethical material" (Agamben 1999, 47) that, according to him, Primo Levi (1989, 22–52) discovered in his analysis of the "grey zone" that some victims of the Nazis inhabited. In *Remnants of Auschwitz*, where Agamben makes these claims, he is looking for a way of thinking of ethics after Auschwitz in non-legalistic terms. Guilt and responsibility, according to him, are notions that are indissolubly linked to the law, and the law is clearly insufficient and inadequate to solve the

ethical issues raised by the Holocaust, as the Nüremberg trials showed. The law is inadequate because the extreme forms of biopolitical power exerted by the Nazis, which turned people into semi-living corpses (the *Muselmänner* described by Primo Levi[53] and other survivors of Nazi concentration camps), created a context where the notions of guilt, innocence and responsibility no longer apply. In order to explain how and why this is so, Agamben relies here on the Aristotelian distinction between *zoe*, natural life, and *bios*, human life, the life of a person who is a member of the *polis*. Sovereign power, understood in the Hobbesian-Foucaultian sense of absolute power over the lives of political subjects, politicizes *zoe* as "bare life": the life of a person dispossessed of all her citizen rights and obligations, which only is insofar as it can be killed by the sovereign. According to Agamben, the camps were the universe of absolute sovereign power and bare life: their purpose was producing bare life, in the form of the *Muselmann*, and killing it. Whatever happened in the camps, therefore, was outside of the logic of *bios* and the *polis*, outside of the logic of transgression of the *polis*'s norms, and that is why the notions of guilt, responsibility and the law, that belong to that realm, cannot do justice to what happened in the camps.

For Agamben, therefore, it is of paramount importance to find a framework to deal with these questions that does not rely on guilt, responsibility, and the law. The extreme forms of biopolitical power exerted by the Nazis cannot find an adequate form of resistance in those concepts; the site of resistance must be elsewhere, he claims. Where? In order to answer this, Agamben turns to some of the most eloquent survivor testimonies, notably those of Primo Levi and Robert Antelme, and reads them through Lévinas' essay and in terms of shame. The advantage that, according to Agamben, shame presents in this context, a opposed to guilt, is that shame is tied to the body, to the irreducibility of the embodied and situated self, and not to good, evil, norms or autonomy: it is prior to all of that, prior to the linguistic structures that allow us to think in those terms.[54] It is therefore a notion that can still be

[53] *Muselmann* was the word used in Auschwitz (other words were used in other camps) to refer to prisoners who through brutalization, extreme starvation, exhaustion and disease had reached a degree of semi-living unresponsiveness, where all that remained was an impulse to seek food, unchecked by any strategic thought that might allow them to avoid further harm to themselves. According to most testimonies, they were doomed to the chambers, if they were not killed first by the ruthless guards. Primo Levi described them thus: "... the *Muselmänner*, the drowned, form the backbone of the camp, an anonymous mass, continually renewed and always identical, of non-men who march and labor in silence, the divine spark dead within them, already too empty to really suffer. One hesitates to call them living: one hesitates to call their death death, in the face of which they have no fear, as they are too tired to understand. They crowd my memory with their faceless presences, and if I could enclose all the evil of our time in one image, I would choose this image which is familiar to me: an emaciated man, with head dropped and shoulders curved, on whose face and in whose eyes not a trace of thought is to be seen" (Levi 1996, 90).

[54] So far, this view bears some resemblances to Sartre's, as will become obvious when I discuss his account of shame later on. However, Agamben and Sartre interpret very differently the meaning and implications of shame being tied to the body, as I will also show.

operative in the realm of "bare life." The shame of the victim of a dehumanizing attack attests, according to Agamben, to the irreducibility of her humanity, as does the shame of those who see such an attack or its consequences. Lisa Guenther, who has voiced some powerful criticisms of Agamben (Guenther 2012), would agree with him on this latter point, although she does not agree at all with his way of conceiving this irreducible humanity.

So, what is the structure of shame such that it can attest to our humanity? Reading Lévinas' *On Escape* through a Heideggerian lens, Agamben interprets shame as an ontological feeling that reveals the insufficiency of humanity, in parallel with Heidegger's analysis of existential guilt as revelatory of *Dasein*'s finitude (Heidegger 2008, para. 58; Welz 2011, 72). Human beings are such that they can be dehumanized, as the Nazis did to their prisoners, but the very act of dehumanization, of desubjectification, reveals the subject that is implied in it. The blush of the student singled out randomly for execution during a death march, as reported by Antelme (1992, 231), the shame of the surviving prisoners after the selections for the gas chambers that Levi (1989, 72–3) tells us about, and the survivor shame they feel after liberation, all attest to this. This is a reaction of resistance that shows the presence of what is being destroyed. Agamben describes shame as a simultaneous movement of subjectification and desubjectification, as a moment when the subject bears witness to her own desubjectification, when the human being bears witness to her own inhumanity.[55] The shame of the victim, of the survivor, attests to this irreducible core. Agamben (1999, 128) goes on to say that shame, therefore, is "the hidden structure of all subjectivity and consciousness". This irreducible core of otherwise vulnerable humanity is the fundamental element of the "new ethical material" (Agamben 1999, 69, 104) discovered by Primo Levi (1989, chap. 2) in his analysis of the "grey zone," which is composed by all those victims that in one way or another collaborated with the Nazis in exchange for a few more months of life, or for slightly better living conditions. Here, according to Agamben, Levi discovers a zone of indistinction between victim and perpetrator, a "zone of irresponsibility" (Agamben 1999, 21) where we find this new ethical material of irreducible humanity that comes *before* good and evil, i.e. before the establishment of the moral law (Agamben 1999, 17–21). At this point, assigning responsibility will not do, he claims. Biopolitics reduces everything, including morality and personhood, to the body, and it is in the body and its emotions where Agamben seeks to find and locates a site of resistance. What this horror demands from us is not an allocation of guilt in a court of justice, but an endless bearing witness on behalf of "those who saw the Gorgon" (Levi 1989, 64).

[55] The notion of bearing witness in this context is a complex philosophical problem in its own right. Discussing it is outside of the scope of my study: here I am simply reproducing Agamben's terminology, or rather, the terminology chosen by his translator, Daniel Heller-Roazen, to render his Italian into English.

There is a widely recognized point to what Agamben says: that harm can never be properly contained and compensated for by the punishments and reparations of legal justice, and that it would be an ethical failure on anyone's part to think that all that these horrors demand from us is putting the perpetrators to trial before a court. Ethics demands more: no compensation can undo the harm done, and this ought to be recognized. But Agamben goes much further than this when he talks about the "zone of irresponsibility" and indistinction between victim and perpetrator, and it is not difficult to understand why his insistence on these ideas has given rise to harsh criticisms. To begin with, several critics, notably Ruth Leys (2009, chap. 5), Lisa Guenther (2012), Claudia Welz (2011) and Phil Hutchinson (2011), have made strong cases to show that Agamben not only misinterpreted, but indeed betrayed the meaning of both Robert Antelme's and Primo Levi's testimonies and analyses by decontextualizing passages and distorting their meaning to fit his own theory. Both Antelme and Levi strongly opposed and criticized any views that went in the direction of Agamben's ideas about the zone of indistinction between victims and perpetrators. Indeed, if anything, Levi's chapter on the "grey zone" is an attempt at clarifying, not blurring, the boundaries between them. That clarification, of course, involves grappling with all the complexities and puzzles of such extreme cases, because an oversimplified black-and-white picture actually obscures the matter, and complicates even further the task of understanding what happened. Guilt and innocence might be impossibly difficult to determine under such oppressive conditions (and that is why Levi does not pass judgment on most of those involved in the grey zone), but this does not mean that everyone in the grey zone was the same, or that they all were like the SS; it does not mean at all that the grey zone is a zone of indistinction. On the contrary, it is a zone that demands incredibly careful, precise and crucial distinctions. And Levi most definitely does not claim that all the prisoners of Nazi concentration camps belonged to the grey zone, or that his reflections in this chapter apply to all prisoners equally. Indeed, *Muselmann* and grey zone are in a sense mutually exclusive categories: the grey zone was composed of those who were ready to do almost anything in order not to become *Muselmänner*, and Levi seems to think (endorsing a remark by Solzhenitsyn) that the grey zone is largely overrepresented among the survivors.[56]

As for the passage from Antelme's *The Human Race* that Agamben draws on, its interpretation is particularly controversial. Agamben lets his reading of Antelme carry a very large part of the argumentative weight that justifies his use of shame as key to the "new ethical material" appropriate

[56] This, at least, is one of the things he says in his famous quote: "I must repeat – we, the survivors, are not the true witnesses. … We survivors are not only an exiguous, but also an anomalous minority: we are those who, by their prevarications or abilities or good luck did not touch bottom. Those who did so, those who say the Gorgon, have not returned to tell about it or have returned mute, but they are the 'Muslims', the submerged, the complete witnesses, the ones whose deposition would have a general significance. They are the rule, we are the exception" (Levi 1989, 63–64). The prevaricators are obviously grey zone, while most of the *Muselmänner* drowned.

to contexts of extreme biopolitical power like the camps. However, Antelme does not mention shame in the specific passage that Agamben analyses: he simply says that the Italian student suddenly singled out for execution during the death march blushed and, in a sentence Agamben omits from his quotation, that *il a l'air confus* (Antelme 1957, 241), an expression that could be translated as "he looks confused," "muddled," or "crestfallen," but not "ashamed" (see Leys 2009, 175; Welz 2011, 75). Moreover, and more importantly, in Antelme's later reflections on this moment, the blush is in no way linked to shame. It is linked to surprise and compared to the pink face of a sick child, in a passage that emphasizes human relatedness, not shame (see Welz 2011, 75–7). Therefore Antelme himself, who witnessed the singling out and execution of the student, does not seem to interpret the blush in terms of shame. Lisa Guenther (2012, 68), for her part, reads this blush as a sign of feelings of humiliation as opposed to shame. As I argued in chapter 1, these can be seen as distinct phenomena, and Guenther argues that they have a different structure. This is how she distinguishes them:

> Humiliation works by singling out this or that person as deviant, out of place, abnormal, or bad, and displaying them before real or imagined others. Humiliation individuates; it isolates someone from all the others, not as a subject with agency and voice but as an object of scrutiny, scorn and possible violence. But this is an empty individuation; for even as it singles one out, humiliation negates one's singularity as *this* subject, distinct from everyone else but still within a social relation. The mechanism of individuation in humiliation singles one out as *that* rather than *this*; it marks one as that which does not belong, as that which must be expelled in order for the community to feel better .... Shame also individuates the subject, but in a different way: not by singling one out for negation or exclusion, but by intensifying the ambiguity of an indissoluble relation to others. ... What is unassumable in the feeling of shame is not an aspect of one's own being, but rather the relation to an other to whose gaze I am exposed, but whose view of myself I cannot control. (Guenther 2012, 61)

The act of humiliation, therefore, is aimed at severing the connection between subjects completely, and the emotional response of humiliation is one of pain or anxiety before the offense, and resistance to it, as it is perceived as undeserved. But shame does not sever social ties this way. The Italian student was being humiliated, singled out for negation, but Agamben reads this as shame. This confusion is what, according to Guenther (2012, 68–9), leads Agamben to produce an analysis of shame in solipsistic terms. But shame does not work in this way, and this is definitely not the structure of the survivor shame described by Levi on various occasions, including his much-quoted passage on the liberation of Auschwitz and the reaction of the Soviet soldiers upon seeing the prisoners:

> They did not greet us, nor smile; they seemed oppressed, not only by pity but also by a confused restraint which sealed their mouths, and kept their eyes fastened on the funereal scene. It was the same shame which we knew so well, which submerged us after the selections, and every time we had to witness or undergo an outrage: the shame that the Germans never knew, the shame which the just man experiences when confronted by a crime committed by another, and he feels remorse because of its existence, because of its having been irrevocably introduced into the world of existing things, and because his will has proven nonexistent or feeble and was incapable of putting up a good defense. (Levi 1989, 72–73)

Once misinterpretations have been clarified, it is clear that Antelme and Levi are talking about different phenomena, and the student's blush cannot illuminate survivor shame, at least not directly.

This takes me to the second powerful criticism of Agamben's views: that he entirely overlooks the importance of intersubjectivity as an essential element to understand both shame and subjectivity (see Guenther 2012; Welz 2011; Hutchinson 2011). Agamben describes the subject witnessing his own desubjectification in completely solipsistic terms, along the lines of Heidegger's claim that existential guilt has nothing to do with breaking norms: it is rather a disclosing of *Dasein*'s finitude. According to Guenther (2012, 68–9), it is wrong to interpret Levi and Antelme through a partial reading of Lévinas, which, in turn, leads us to Heidegger's being-towards-death. Shame, survivor shame and humanity are not about the anguish of discovering our mortality: they are about being inevitably and constitutively in a relation to others, a relation on which our life and death depends, and which therefore makes us constitutively vulnerable to harm by them. Vulnerability does not mean finitude, realizing that I will die. It means dependence on others, realizing that my life, well-being and identity depend to a crucial extent on my connection to others, who also depend on me in the same way.

It is also very unclear where Agamben's account leaves us in relation to that central figure of his book, the *Muselmann*, who, according to all descriptions, had lost the capacity to feel emotions. The *Muselmann*'s position would indeed be one where the old Scottish proverb quoted by Helen Lynd (1999, 33) would apply: "When the heart's past hope, the face is past shame." And what is the status of one whose face is past shame, who can no longer bear witness to his own desubjectification? This is to a certain extent why Claudia Welz (2011) disagrees with the claim that shame is the underlying structure of all subjectivity, that it is ontological in the way Agamben presents it. For her, survivor shame is indeed *survivor* shame: it belongs to the realm of conscience, and it appears in those whose consciences were not destroyed by the brutality of the Nazis, in those who, due to several reasons, including luck, kept (or regained) a sense of their own humanity in an ethical sense. Welz seems to

agree with Phil Hutchinson (2011) here that "human" or "humanity" can be both biological and ethical categories. "Inhuman," however, is exclusively an ethical category. And the problem here is that Agamben mixes up the biological and the ethical, thus coming up with an ontological account. Shame, however, would be connected to humanity in its strictly ethical sense, to the notions of conscience and self-respect (see Welz 2011, 78–80, where she quotes Taylor; Taylor 1985). This critique, however, seems to bring us back to the accounts that presuppose a normative understanding to be in place in order for us to feel moral shame, such as most accounts reviewed in chapter 2. And Agamben would argue that reducing the moral to the biological, reducing humanity to bare life, is precisely what extreme biopolitical power does: his endeavor is to make sense of an ethical obligation to respect the other even in that context. He claims to have found it in the body, at a low level that sovereign power cannot make disappear. As I have shown, however, Agamben's views are very problematic and don't do justice to shame. A further issue with him is whether he is justified in establishing such a close necessary link between morality and guilt as a moral emotion with the law of the *polis* and the administration of justice in court. Why would the understanding of ethical values necessarily rely on that? Welz's interpretation of conscience, however, links it to self-reflection, and my question is, precisely, how shame can contribute, if it does, to establishing and developing such a moral conscience. It is undeniable that, once in place, conscience informs moral shame, but is there a level of shame that is prior to this? And if Agamben's strategy for locating it fails, is there another way to locate it?

SARTRE, OR THE IRREDUCIBLE INTERSUBJECTIVITY OF SHAME

In order to proceed and try to answer these questions, let me repeat what I see as the key difficulty with Agamben's view: the lack of an intersubjective dimension. The problem is not that he detaches the ethical value of shame from a fully developed moral conscience; the problem is that he conceives of humanity and its resistant ethical core in overly solipsistic terms, as something close to being-towards-death. Guenther (2012), for her part, thinks that the resistant moral residue that we find in those circumstances of extreme degradation does not amount to awareness of our mortality, but to indissoluble intersubjectivity.[57] To repeat, she argues that Agamben makes a mistake when he

[57] "The importance of shame in this context is its emphasis on *relations* rather than acts: I feel shame not because of what I have done, but rather because others matter to me, and because I care what they think of me. The capacity for shame attests to a remnant, however small, of interhuman relationality – an interest, however diminished or degraded, in others. This is why shame can function as a site of resistance, a feeling for justice even

interprets Lévinas' early claim about the fundamental insufficiency of human existence. That insufficiency should not be read in Heideggerian terms as being-towards-death. It should be read in terms of Lévinas' own later elaborations of the concept as interdependent intersubjectivity. Shame does not reveal to me that I am mortal (anguish may do that, but not shame); shame reveals to me that my own being and my very existence—who I am and the fact that I am—depend on others.

An account that greatly illuminates the intersubjectivity of shame without tying it to conscience is the classic one offered by Jean-Paul Sartre in *Being and Nothingness* (Sartre 1969; see Guenther 2011; Guenther 2012; Zahavi 2012). Shame is indeed one of the cornerstones of Sartre's understanding of intersubjectivity in this book. Having given an account of the structures of subjectivity: in-itself (facticity, the mode of being of things that just are, without being reflectively aware of themselves) and for-itself (transcendence, self-reflection), Sartre moves on to intersubjectivity. The Third Part of *Being and Nothingness*, which is entirely devoted to "being-for-Others," begins with a chapter entitled "The Existence of Others."[58] As this title indicates, Sartre is dealing here with the problem of solipsism, with what nowadays is commonly called "the problem of other minds." And Sartre finds the way out of solipsism precisely through the phenomenological analysis of our experience, notably in shame. According to him (and this is his criticism of Husserl), other people are not only given to us as mere objects of our experience, as special kinds of objects with subjective features (although that is possible of course), they are actually given to us as subjects in the full sense of the word in the phenomenon "being-seen-by-another" (Sartre 1969, 257). Sartre mentions three emotions that instantiate this phenomenon: fear, shame and pride, but shame is clearly the most prominent in his account. In shame, we experience the other as subject, and therefore, according to Sartre, we find ontological proof of the existence of the other (Sartre 1969, pt. 3, ch. 1). If our primordial experience of the other was one of the other as object, no measure of animation could manage the shift to make us apprehend him as subject, because her subjectivity would always still be a hypothesis, and thus the door remains open for skepticism. But the phenomenon "being-seen-by-another" reveal her as subject and give us "*apodictic evidence* for the presence of the subject-as-other" (Zahavi 2001, 142).

in the midst of radical injustice: because it confirms the root of responsibility in our relations with others" (Guenther 2012, 64).

[58] In *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre distinguishes between "other" and "Other." When he writes "other," he is referring to the other as object. When he capitalizes the word, he is referring to the other as subject. I keep capitalizations only when employing directly Sartrean terminology or when quoting him. Since this is not a work of Sartrean scholarship, I do this to avoid constant and unnecessary capitalizations: the other I refer to throughout this dissertation is always the other as subject. When this is not the case, I make it explicit that I am referring to the other exclusively as an object of my perception.

But at the same time as it reveals the other as subject, shame is a form of self-consciousness. Indeed, Sartre defends that shame is a form of intentional consciousness, the object of which is myself: "It is a shameful apprehension *of* something and this something is *me*. I am ashamed of what I *am*. Shame therefore realizes an intimate relation of myself to myself" (Sartre 1969, 221). It is intimate, because in his view, through shame *I* discover an aspect of *my* being. Therefore, on this view, Lévinas' early analysis would be correct as far as the self-relation is concerned. But the relation to another is crucial too. Indeed, as follows from my above remarks about intersubjectivity, shame is essentially a form of social self-consciousness.[59] In shame, we experience the other as a subject and at the same time an aspect of our own being is disclosed: being-for-Others. These two apprehensions are indissolubly linked; one cannot happen without the other. Through our experience of the other as subject we become acquainted with a crucial dimension of ourselves, and vice versa: in our felt acquaintance with this dimension of ourselves we find ontological proof of the existence of the other (see Guenther 2011, 26). And shame is central to Sartre's argument, because for him it is the most prominent form of the phenomenon where this is disclosed to us.

What is then the structure of the phenomenon "being-seen-by-another" in shame? Sartre (1969, 259–60) gives one famous and much discussed example: I am sticking my ear to a door or looking through a keyhole, spying on someone (out of jealousy, perhaps, or curiosity or vice, he says). In the moment of spying, I am not thinking about myself, thematizing myself; my whole consciousness is focused on the world outside, on the people I'm looking at through the keyhole. As Sartre puts it, in that moment, the moment of looking, "my consciousness sticks to my acts; it *is* my acts… My attitude, for example, has no 'outside'; it is a pure process of relating the instrument (the keyhole) to the end to be attained (the spectacle to be seen), a pure mode of losing myself in the world…" (Sartre 1969, 259). But suddenly I hear a noise behind me: I start, I blush, I turn my head. Did someone just see me spying? Am I being seen by another? Suddenly, my consciousness is no longer sticking to my actions; I have become aware of myself in a different way. But this form of self-awareness is not equivalent to reflective self-consciousness: I do not apprehend myself as the "I" that I thematize when I think about myself or about my actions; it is not, for example, what some more recent philosophers would call my "narrative sense of self."[60] What I become aware of is rather a "me," an object in the world that somebody else can perceive. As Lisa Guenther (2011, 26) puts it, "suddenly, I have an outside, an appearance which is mine, but which nevertheless escapes my own grasp, a skin which is more immediately accessible to

[59] I am grateful to Dan Zahavi for this formulation.
[60] I use this turn of phrase because I agree with Peter Goldie's points and reservations about the idea of a "narrative self," while also sharing his conviction in the importance of narratives for making sense of our lives and who we are (Goldie 2012).

others than to myself." That dimension, the "outside" or objective dimension of myself, can only be revealed in my encounter with another subject, that is why Sartre calls it my "being-for-Others." It should be noted, however, that the empirical presence of the other before me is not necessary for shame: perhaps the noise I heard was caused by an object falling, and as a matter of fact there was nobody there to see me. This, however, does not mean that my experience of the other as subject is an illusion, it simply means that the presence of the other-subject does not depend on the other-object (Zahavi 2001, 143). The feeling of exposure still reveals my being-for-Others, my outside, objective dimension: my exposability. As Zahavi (2001, 143–44) emphasizes, this reveals an underlying tension in Sartre's account of intersubjectivity, but I will come back to this.

The question is now, why is this so? Why do I only apprehend the objective dimension of myself in my encounter with the other? The answer comes from an analysis of the dynamics of intersubjective relationships. Sartre paints a more or less Hegelian picture (at least he claims to be using Hegel to correct Husserl, although the final step is Heidegger), where two absolute freedoms (subjects) cannot coexist phenomenologically: either I am a subject and the other is an object of my consciousness, or I negate myself, I recognize her as a subject and I then become an object of her consciousness. This recognition, however, is not such a deliberate act as my formulation seems to imply. This becomes clear by looking at the structure that prevents us from apprehending two subjects as subjects simultaneously. According to Sartre, consciousness entails a split between itself and its objects: consciousness is the experiencer, objects are the experienced. As a pure experiencer, and from a first-person perspective, consciousness is pure freedom, pure possibility: it does not let itself be fixed and defined by what it is now, but it projects itself towards the future, towards what it can become. Objects, on the other hand, are more or less fixed and determined, limited; they are out there, located in space and time, they are what they are. Now, contra (a certain interpretation of) Husserl and with Hegel, it is indeed possible to recognize the other as subject in the full sense of the word, as pure freedom and pure possibility, and I do this when I apprehend myself as an object of his experience fixated by his gaze.[61] I apprehend his gaze, and myself as the target of it. And I recognize him through this apprehension, through this phenomenon that overcomes me, so the recognition of the other as subject in this Sartrean sense, in the phenomenon of shame, is not a deliberate act of submission, but a way of apprehending myself, himself and our relationship.

Now, as I pointed out before, Sartre explicitly remarks that the physical presence of the other is not necessary for shame to arise in me. According to him, in shame the other is precisely *not* given to me as

[61] Different authors render Sartre's *le regard d'autrui* as 'gaze' or 'look,' but both terms refer to the same Sartrean concept.

an animated object (an eye that moves in my direction), but as a gaze that objectifies me. The other-subject is the other-gaze (Sartre 1969, 277–281): the gaze is not a head turned in my direction or an eye pointed at me, but a consciousness to which I appear as object. Shame does not depend on the actual direction of the eyes of a particular other, but on the existence of another subject. If the other is not apprehended as a consciousness, a gaze that objectifies me, then, for Sartre, the other is not being recognized as pure freedom, he is just perceived as a very special object with some mental or subjective capabilities. And, according to Sartre (1969, 268), objectifying the other in this way is precisely one of the strategies we use to regain control after feeling ashamed; but while shame lasts, I am an object, and the other is a subject. Under the gaze of another subject, I am immediately objectified. And that, the feeling of being an object, is what Sartre takes shame to be. Shame, therefore, is a form of recognition of the other as subject, but it is also a recognition that I am what the other sees (I endorse her perspective, if ever so fleetingly). In shame, I recognize that I *am* the object the other is seeing. I am an object: I am nature, a body, I am fragile and vulnerable (Sartre 1969, 259).

That is why the empirical presence of the eyes of the other is unnecessary for shame. It doesn't make a difference that there is no concrete other looking at me (that when I turn my head, nobody is there and the noise turns out to have been caused by a gust of air moving an object). If it did, according to Sartre, I would be apprehending the other as object, because the physical presence of the other as a body is a worldly matter, a matter of a material thing being physically located here or there. To apprehend the other in terms of the occurrent location of his body is to objectify him. The presence of the other as subject, however, is permanent, it does not depend on the empirical location of an object (a body, a face, an ear, an eye) in space and time, it is transcendent: it is a "bond between human-realities" (Sartre 1969, 278) that consists in the possibility of "being-looked-at" or "being-looking-at" (Sartre 1969, 279–80). The presence of the other as being, as subject, as a matter of human relationality, is permanent, regardless of whether his body or his eyes are concretely here right now or not: when I have a relationship with someone, she never stops being present for me (Sartre 1969, 279). The other can be and is present to me in the distance, and in certain circumstances, I can feel exposed to her even when she is not physically there. Nevertheless, Sartre also says that the presence of the other as subject is not an abstract condition (the possibility of being seen by just anyone, whoever that may be). It is the possibility of my being seen by a real other, someone I'm in relation with.

Now, as Zahavi (2001, 143–44) argues, at this point there is a clear tension in Sartre's account: he criticizes Husserl and Heidegger for analyzing intersubjectivity in aprioristic terms, but he later seems to fall into apriorism himself. Let me spell this out. On the one hand, he criticizes Husserl and Heidegger for giving unsatisfactory accounts of intersubjectivity that make the existence of the other

derive from the structure of individual consciousness, or of *Dasein*, in Heidegger. Being-with, for Heidegger, does not depend on the actual encounter with the other; it is a mode in which the world is disclosed to us. And furthermore, it belongs to an inauthentic mode of being, the mode of the *they*. Authenticity means switching out of that mode and confronting my individual being-toward-death. This, in Sartre's view, is no solution to the conundrum of solipsism, because being-with is a structure of individual consciousness which just gets actualized through whoever happens to be around: the actual other has no role in conferring it to me, she simply fills a gap that was always there. To solve it, one has to fully take on board the transcendence of the other, the fact that she is other and she is beyond me: my relationship with her is not the mere empirical realization of a possibility that was always already a part of the structure of my consciousness. This is why Sartre insists that the presence of the other is not an abstract condition, but a concrete relation. As Zahavi (2001, 141) explains:

> According to Sartre, the experiences are in each case only made possible *in and by means of* concrete encounter with the other. The *cogito* does indeed cast me toward the other, as it were. However, this is not because the *cogito* discloses an a priori structure within me, myself, that would be directed toward an equally a priori other; rather, it is because what the *cogito* reveals to me is the concrete and indubitable presence of *this* or *that* concrete other.

Thus, this concrete encounter does not disclose something which was already there; it is not founded on an a priori structure that made it possible: it changes the structure of my being. In the encounter, I become being-for-Others. In spite of this, in clarifying that the empirical presence of the other is not necessary for my shame, Sartre seems once more to be giving an aprioristic account of intersubjectivity. This transcendent presence of the other subject that is independent of the location of the eyes of the other in space and time resembles an abstract possibility of being looked at by just anybody. However, as Zahavi (2001, 144) argues, apriorism does not have to be a problem:

> ... embedding the other (i.e., embedding an openness toward the other) in the ontological structure of the for-itself does not at all have to imply that the other is neutralized or rendered harmless. Rather ... linking the other to the structure of the for-itself can express precisely the "potentiated" consideration of the other as "raised to a higher power" (as is the case in Merleau-Ponty).

Now a question here is still: why is this form of self-consciousness different from the form that appears in self-reflection? When I reflect about myself, do I not thereby turn myself into an *object* of reflection? Isn't self-objectification what reflective self-consciousness (for-itself) is about? What is the difference, as far as self-consciousness is concerned, between being an object of my consciousness and being an

object of somebody else's consciousness? The answer to this question is directly connected to a point I made in chapter 1, following Felipe León (2013), when I discussed the issue of the "whole self." There I defended that shame reveals our embodiment and situatedness, and according to Sartre, pure self-reflection is unable to do this. Being an object of reflection is not the same as being an object in the world. I can never entirely apprehend myself as an object in the world if I stay purely within the realm of consciousness for-itself: the pure *cogito* can never locate itself within objective space and time. In pure reflection, I only find my consciousness; I am pure possibility, pure freedom, and reflection is disembodied and not situated. But shame is the opposite of that. In shame, I am an object of someone else's gaze, *this* object, fixed, riveted. I am a body situated in objective space and time, two dimensions of myself that are only actually accessible from second- and third-person perspectives and not, except derivatively or imaginatively, from my own, first-person, perspective. Reflection is unable to locate and rivet me in this way to my body and my situation, and therefore the objective dimension of my being, being-for-Others, has to be disclosed in emotion, in a shudder, not in thought, and *always before* someone else, in the presence of the other-gaze. In shame, I am for-Others and I discover my being as an object in the world, an object to which others have a kind of access I do not control. This self-acquaintance does not take place in the reflective mode of "knowing" (I do not learn an unknown feature of myself), but in the non-reflective mode of "being," since in the experience my being is altered: no longer for-itself, but for-Others. In shame, we are disclosed as being-for-Others, and that is a constitutive condition. As Guenther (2011, 26) explains:

> ... the feeling of exposure introduces something irrevocable into my existence: a being-for-Others that *contests my position at the center of the world* and *adds a new dimension to my existence* as a consciousness for-itself. ... This self of which I am ashamed does not already exist prior to the encounter with the Other; rather, it is conferred upon me by the Other's gaze. From my own perspective as an absolutely free and self-transcending consciousness, ''I am what I am not, and I am not what I am.'' I never coincide with any particular determination of myself. But from the perspective of another free subject who captures me as an object in his or her field of vision, I acquire a ''nature,'' a being that is what it is. For the Other, but never for myself, ''I am somebody,'' a being who is spatially and temporally positioned within the world.

The gaze of the other, then, does not merely reveal to me what I am: it constitutes me as a new kind of being. My being-for-Others is not an image that is completely disconnected from myself, locked in the other person's head. Rather, "it's a perfectly real being, *my* being as a condition of my selfness confronting the Other and of the Other's selfness confronting me. It is my being-outside: ... an outside

assumed and recognized as *my* outside" (Sartre 1969, 285–86). To repeat: I recognize (however fleetingly) that I am what the other sees (see Zahavi 2012, 307).

SELF-REFLECTION VERSUS BEING-FOR-OTHERS

In order to further clarify the difference between the "I" of self-reflection and the "me" of shame, I will explore now the possibility that some instances of shame can be understood as moments in which my self-narrative collapses through the disruption of my being-for-Others. As I suggested before, I assume that the so-called "narrative sense of self" falls within the realm of the "I" of self-reflection, even though the inputs of others and reality-checks, among other things, are indispensable for a narrative that can succeed in generating a sense of self that helps me make sense of my life and navigate the world (see Goldie 2012; Schechtman 1996). However, those are not specifically narrative ingredients, and in my interpretation, shame can function as a signal that a narrative has become too disconnected from others and the world. While a narrative is a self-representation that requires self-objectification, it is also always a dynamic hypothesis. It is not located in objective space and time, and even though it tries to fixate a determination of me, it remains within the sphere of the subjective, within the space of freedom, possibility and indeterminacy, which is by no means the case of my being-for-Others in shame. Let us see illustrate this through some examples.

Think again about Virginia Woolf's short story *The New Dress*. Poor Mabel Waring was all happy and excited planning her attendance at the party, choosing the fabrics, the colors, and the design for a new dress that would make her triumph: she was oriented to the future, to her possibilities. And let me highlight here that, as Peter Goldie (2012, chap. 4) eloquently shows, our narrative sense of self is not only, nor mainly, about making sense of our past. It is at least as invested, if not more, in our plans for the future. In line with the existentialist insight, our orientation towards the future is crucial for our sense of who we are, and we constantly use narratives to project ourselves this way. These narratives are forms of self-reflection that imply a high degree of self-objectification (imagining determinations and identifying with them), but they lack the solidity of "being-seen-by-another" in shame (or pride, for that matter). They are entirely subjective, dynamic and changeable, and have no outside spatio-temporal location in the shared world. So Mabel Waring builds a narrative of herself as a stylish woman who is going to impress other people at the party with the regal elegance of older days. This implies a self-determination, but one with which she cannot fully identify yet, because it lies ahead, in the future, as one of ever so many possibilities of what she may become. In imagining and narrating herself thus, the future is open to her, and it remains open until she walks into Clarissa Dalloway's house. However, as soon as she feels the gaze of the housekeeper on her, that possible future is foreclosed, and indeed, according to Karlsson and Sjöberg (2009), not only that future but all others too: as I explained in chapter 1, this is precisely what the experience of a "frozen now" in shame

amounts to. The gaze of the housekeeper inescapably fixes Mabel in one determination, cancelling all other possibilities and making her feel her own lack of control over her outside, over her appearance before others, over her objective dimension, and thus the future-oriented narrative collapses under her shame: the new dress is a terrible mistake. There she is: "the eccentric."

Another fascinating literary example, discussed by both Gabriele Taylor (1985) and Peter Goldie (2000), is a passage from James Joyce's short story "The Dead," the story that closes Joyce's book *Dubliners*. The situation is the following: Gabriel Conroy and his wife, Gretta, have been to a Christmas party organized by Gabriel's aunts. On their way out of the house, as they are putting on their warm clothes and saying their goodbyes, Gretta pauses, with an absent and melancholy expression, to listen to the piano still playing in the drawing room. Seeing her thus, Gabriel is charmed by her beauty and demeanor. He starts evoking their happy past together, which arises in him feelings of intense tenderness and desire for her, and launches him into a reverie while they move through the streets of Dublin with other guests returning home. He looks at Gretta during their casual conversations with the others, and imagines that her pensive mood is caused by similar thoughts and feelings to the ones he is having. When they finally arrive to their room and are left alone, Gabriel discovers that this was not at all the case: she had been remembering a love story from her youth, the story of a fragile and sick boy who always used to sing the song they had heard from a distance at the party. A youth that died for her, Gretta says, many years ago, because he had stood far too long in the cold, waiting under her window to see her one last time and say goodbye before she was sent to school to Dublin. Gretta doesn't have the smallest suspicion about what has been going on in Gabriel's mind, but he, who had feebly tried to stop her telling the story by making ironic remarks, feels deeply ashamed:

> Gabriel felt humiliated by the failure of his irony and by the evocation of this figure from the dead ... While he had been full of memories of their secret life together, full of tenderness and joy and desire, she had been comparing him in her mind with another. A shameful consciousness of his own person assailed him. He saw himself as a ludicrous figure, acting as a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist, orating to vulgarians and idealising his own clownish lust, the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror. Instinctively he turned his back more to the light, lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead. (Joyce 2000, 221).

In my view, this is another clear case of a self-narrative derailing because of an external gaze that clashes with it, fixating the self in one determination and foreclosing its possibilities. It is, again, an illustration that self-reflection never properly locates oneself as an object in the world: only the gaze of

the other can do that. But the case here is not as clear-cut as with Mabel Waring, because Gabriel Conroy is not so clearly exposed to a censoring look, and it seems very unlikely that Gretta is fixating him in the determinations that he applies to himself ("a ludicrous figure," "a pennyboy for his aunts, a nervous well-meaning sentimentalist," a "pitiable fatuous fellow"). Would she really disapprove of him for showing he cares for his adoring aunts, delivering the flattering speech that was appropriate for the occasion, romantically evoking the past and desiring his wife? Here we come again to the problem of who is assessing and censoring. We are never told what she thinks of him, but judging from the way Gretta is described in the story, by her behavior toward her husband and her in-laws, by the things we are told about her relationship with him, it seems quite implausible for her to judge Gabriel as he judges himself. Besides, when he is left alone with Gretta, he doesn't impose his desire on her. He listens to her tale, in spite of the emotions it arises in him, repressing the expression of his own feelings in consideration of hers (except for a couple of ironical remarks in passing). And finally, she does not even reject him or push him away: he never gets to let her know what he had been thinking and wanting, and it just happens that the story and the feelings she wishes to share with him are not in harmony with his unexpressed desires. Why, then, that deep shame that extends back to his behavior of the whole evening?

This question may seem odd: is it not obvious from the story why he feels ashamed? It is, I agree. I do not mean to imply that Gabriel's shame is unintelligible. On the contrary: it is perfectly intelligible, and we understand it through the narration of the evening's events and of Gabriel's thoughts. But while in Mabel's case we can easily assume that she has perceived a look of shock and disapproval in the housekeeper's face upon seeing her dress, and that Mabel now sees herself as the housekeeper sees her, as "the eccentric," this is not so clearly the case for Gabriel. In the moment of his turning "his back more to the light, lest she might see the shame that burned upon his forehead," Gretta is completely unaware of his shame and what causes it. She is clearly not fixating him as "the pitiable fatuous fellow he had caught a glimpse of in the mirror." Yet I want to argue that the structure of both experiences is the same. In which sense, then, can Gabriel be "what the other sees"?

Indeed, throughout the story, which is written in a piercingly nostalgic tone, Gabriel manifests a clear uneasiness with several identity labels that others apply to him, both in an approving and a disapproving manner: "the intellectual," "the anglophile Irishman," and so on. But it is not always explicit how his own self-narrative opposes those labels, and he in turn uses objectifying strategies (labelling and objectifying others) to get rid of those uncomfortable feelings. Then when the moment arrives to leave the party, Gretta is entranced by the music and Gabriel becomes entranced looking at Gretta. At this point, drawing on memories from their past together, Gabriel builds an uplifting

narrative of intense, enduring, romantic love that turns him into Gretta's knight in shining armor, and launches him into the future. It offers him the promise of an identity other than those he was so uncomfortable with during the night. When he asks Gretta about her thoughts, he is left facing the enormous gap between his own self-representation and Gretta's idea of him: "she had been comparing him in her mind with another." This of course does not mean that she sees him as a "pitiable fatuous fellow," but it does mean that he is presumably *not* her knight in shining armor. To Gabriel, the great romantic story of Gretta's life belongs to the sick boy who died for her, not to him. Gabriel comes in second, at best; or at least that is his impression.

This means that, interestingly, despite the fact that Gretta never even suspects her husband's shame, and despite the fact that she is very unlikely to be judging him harshly (actually, she is most likely *not* judging him at all), her presence and her gaze are indispensable for his shame. She is clearly the other that fixates him in a frozen now. And this is so despite the fact that Gabriel is not adopting her evaluation of him. One could reply here that he is imagining what she would think if she were aware of all his thoughts, but again, from what we are told about Gretta, this seems extremely unlikely. Besides, nothing in the description of Gabriel's thoughts and feelings indicates that this is the case, that he is imagining what Gretta would think, her assessment, if she knew. It is enough for him to have realized that he is not her romantic hero. His harsh judgment of himself follows from the moment when he becomes aware that his self-narrative is not in line with his objective side, with what others see, with what she sees. Then all labels weigh on him at once: labels that fixate, not narratives that project. The key is not the specific label that the other might be applying, but the mismatch and the feeling that a whole essential dimension was missing and is forever out of reach and out of control. Indeed, Sartre attributes shame not to a concrete evaluation, but precisely to the feeling of not being in possession of one's whole being, of having an aspect that escapes one:

> ... shame is only the original feeling of having my being *outside*, engaged in another being and as such without any defence, illuminated by the absolute light which emanates from a pure subject. Shame is the consciousness of being irremediably what I always was: "in suspense"—that is, in the mode of the "not yet" or of the "already-no-longer." Pure shame is not a feeling of being this or that guilty object but in general of being *an object*; that is, of *recognizing myself* in this degraded, fixed, and dependent being which I am for the Other. Shame is the feeling of an *original fall*, not because of the fact that I may have committed this or that particular fault but simply that I have 'fallen' into the world in the midst of things and that I need the mediation of the Other in order to be what I am. (Sartre 1969, 288–89)

Gretta's perspective certainly reveals this dimension of dependence, in the sense that her tale completely obliterates the possibility of Gabriel seeing himself as the knight in shining armor anymore. He realizes that his being is outside: he needs her confirmation in order to sustain that story. Without it, his self-narrative collapses. And so it does, because the truly romantic story in her past is the story of the young boy who sang so sweetly and died for her, not that of her husband. The knight has fallen from his high horse[62] and cannot get back on it. That possibility has vanished, and not only for the future, but also for the past: in fact, there never was a knight and there never was a horse. In the context of our narrative sense of self, possibilities are not only forward-looking in a narrow sense, because our narrative sense of self overarches past and future: turns of events can and do change our past, not in the sense of altering events, but in the sense of altering their meaning and significance, and thus also the possibilities these events open for the future (see Goldie 2012, chap. 2, 5). To use Sartre's formulation, Gretta's story elicits in Gabriel "the consciousness of being irremediably what he always was," not a knight in shining armor, but "the pitiable fatuous fellow" that goes around imagining himself and trying to present himself to others as far more interesting, sophisticated and attractive than he really is (shame is often self-generated, as a reversal of vanity). Again, I do not mean to imply that all this is what Gretta thinks: we cannot know that, because Joyce's narrative does not allow us to know. But this is certainly Gabriel's impression, and his awareness of the mismatch is his shame. The evaluation can be (in Gabriel's case, is) private, but it is done from the perspective and in the awareness of our being-for-Others. Being-for-Others is not an abstract or generic truth that could be found in a "view from nowhere." That is not the kind of object-ness it reveals, the object-ness of being a number on a list or one's demographic information. The object-ness it reveals is that of being an object of somebody else's experience, of being in a relation with someone else. It is second-personal.

To repeat and sum up, Sartre's view, therefore, is that I need the other in order to realize and fully comprehend the structures of my being, to disclose to me my being-for-Others, my objective side: self-reflection can't do this.[63] This happens in the phenomenon "being-seen-by-another" (Sartre 1969, 257), which we experience most prominently in the emotion of shame. In this phenomenon, the Other is given to me directly as a subject, and I am an object for her. This has two key implications: I recognize the other as subject, and my subjectivity changes fundamentally, I am not just being-for-itself but being-for-Others. Shame, in this context, presupposes a Me-object for the other, but also an ipseity (selfness) who feels shame. So shame is a unitary apprehension of three dimensions: "*I* am ashamed of

[62] Thanks to Antonio Gómez Ramos for this helpful formulation.
[63] Indeed, as Reddy (2008, chap. 7) suggests, self-reflection might not even be possible in the absence of a previous experience of being-for-Others.

myself before the *Other*" (Sartre 1969, 289). This means that selfhood is intertwined with alterity and partially constituted by it (Sartre 1969, 221–23).

FREEDOM, OBJECTIVITY AND INTERSUBJECTIVITY

Now, one criticism that has been repeatedly made of Sartre's views in this part of *Being and Nothingness* is that he offers too negative a view of our relationships to others (see Guenther 2011; Zahavi 2012). As Guenther (2011, 27) argues, Sartre's way of describing our encounter with the other through shame forecloses the possibility of transforming shame or moving beyond this stalled dialectic: I am either a subject and objectify the other, or she is the subject and objectifies me. I am either the absolutely free and powerful perceiver of an animated object, or I am trapped without escape in my own objectivity. Can I never apprehend the other as subject while retaining a sense of my own subjectivity? Must one always objectify the other? And is it true that the other always subordinates me and destroys my freedom and possibilities? Some of the people we encounter do, but it is highly problematic (and unlikely) to think that absolutely all our interpersonal relations are like that. Sartre's asymmetric picture of intersubjectivity leaves no room whatsoever for those nurturing and caring relationships that actually support and reinforce our freedom (Guenther 2011, 27). Caring relationships can achieve this by helping us shape and develop values and criteria for choice, and by opening up possibilities that otherwise wouldn't exist. Freedom, and particularly choice become groundless and devoid of sense and value in a world of infinite possibilities, with no limitations, where choosing one thing does not necessarily imply giving up something else. However, others can enable freedom by opening up possibilities, by making choice meaningful, by conferring meaning and value to the alternatives.

Part of the problem is that Sartre reads Hegel's (1976) account of the encounter with the other and the struggle for recognition in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in overly negative terms, as if it could only be resolved asymmetrically, as if the only possible result was the master-slave relation.[64] But Hegel was very clear that recognition in his sense, the recognition that confirms me as a singular subject, is mutual and reciprocal: it can only come from another free subject, from someone whose freedom I recognize, from someone I can care about (see Gómez Ramos forthcoming). A fully-determined, non-free object is not the kind of being that can provide me with successful recognition: recognition confirms my singularity precisely *because*, and only because, the one who gives it is also a free subject.

[64] Thanks to Antonio Gómez Ramos for pressing this point.

Otherwise, it doesn't confirm me at all. Sartre's argument also implies something like this, insofar as being-for-Others can only be discovered intersubjectively: as I explained above, objects do no reveal it to me and self-reflection doesn't either. But the way in which he develops his analysis later on obscures this and plays heavily on the notion of objectification in a way that seems to obliterate the subjectivity of one of the two parts in the relationship. The notion of objectification, however, implies a certain degree of tension (the very notion implies the prior recognition of the other as subject: one cannot objectify an object), particularly if one loses sight of the fact that it is a process that requires constant activity on the part of the objectifier, and for this reason it can be misleading as a means of grasping the nature of our relations to others, even in shame. It seems to require at least a certain refinement, and this is what I aim to do in the following pages. Indeed, Hegel thought that the crucial importance of the intersubjective encounter is that, through it, I take possession of my freedom. The other does not—or at least not only—reveal to me my objectivity; she confers me the full condition of a free singular subject.

Jonathan Webber (2011) tries to offer a possible way out of the stalled dialectic of objectification, sadism-masochism, within Sartrean thought. In Webber's view, Sartre did not think that all human relations are based on shame and structured in this way: they are only structured in this way within the project of bad faith. Bad faith, Webber argues, is what leads to the objectification of self and others. Webber's thesis is that one should read Sartre's account of shame in *Being and Nothingness* through the lens of his notion of bad faith. Only then can we understand his very negative view of interpersonal relations and his famous slogan that hell is other people. In Webber's view, it is a common mistake to consider Sartre's discussion of intersubjectivity in this book, including his phenomenological analysis of being-for-Others and his descriptions of shame, independently of his discussion of bad faith in the same book. Sartre's discussion of our relations to others should not be read as an analysis of intersubjectivity, period. It should be read, instead, as an "account of the lives to which we are condemned by the project of bad faith" (Webber 2011, 191). According to Webber, then, the stalled dialectic of objectification is a product of the project of bad faith.

How so? According to Sartre, because we are self-reflective, because we are being for-itself, there is something fundamental about human existence, "namely that we are what we are not and are not what we are" (Webber 2011, 183). This is a Heideggerian point: since we are historical beings and project ourselves towards the future, we can never be fixated by a momentary definition; our essence cannot be captured by a description of properties at one time. Rather, we are our possibilities: we are pure freedom, the freedom to become different. Any attempt to capture the totality of our being in a fixed definition negates our future possibilities, and therefore our freedom, our true nature. And this true

nature, our authentic being, consists precisely in not being what we are now, in eluding any attempt at a definition. The way Sartre describes it, bad faith consists in trying to identify with and pretending to be fully defined by one fixed definition. He gives the example of a waiter who fully identifies with his role and lives and behaves as if he had no other choice but to be a waiter, as if this was his nature (Sartre 1969, 59–60). When we live in bad faith, trying to identify with one definition, anguish pervades our coming face to face with ourselves and shame pervades our encounters with other people (Webber 2011, 185, 191). Freedom completely precludes the possibility of defining oneself by one particular, fixed identity ("I am a waiter"). If I think of my being as dependent upon that particular identity, anything that challenges it, especially my freedom, must be anguishing: it would seem that if I'm not my definition, I lose myself. If I lose that definition, then what am I? Nothing? This is why freedom is anguishing. Equally, shame must be the product of my encounter with the other if I experience this encounter as making me lose myself in a different way: by fixating me in a definition that denies the identity I am attaching to. The process we saw at play in my previous examples of Mabel Waring and Gabriel Conroy could be described in terms of bad faith, where the elegant woman was denied by the eccentric, and the knight in shining armor was denied by "the pitiable fatuous fellow." Conversely, if I present myself before the other under a certain description I identify with, and her gaze confirms me in my description, pride ensues. Pride is equally self-objectifying, but it is an objectification I seek and feel good about, because it supports my project of bad faith (Sartre 1969, 290).

But is this the only possibility for human relations, that we objectify each other, that we crush each other's freedom? Jonathan Webber thinks not. He interprets Sartre as claiming that this is a product of our culture: in our surroundings, others see us this way, as defined in a fixed manner by one label, one identity, they expect us to be thus defined and we internalize this expectation and aspire to fulfil it (Webber 2011, 186–87). Thinking of ourselves in this way, we then go on a quest to find the "true" identity by which we should be defined and try to make others accept and confirm it: "this is who I truly am." But no label can fully define and contain a human existence. This is why we struggle with our own freedom, which challenges the idea of the one true identity, and we struggle with our lack of control of the way in which others see us, of the labels they apply to us. The encounter with the other is shameful when it goes against my project of bad faith, although it can also be pride-inducing, if the other confirms my identity (Sartre 1969, 290). But Webber implies that it should be possible to have authentic relations to others in a different cultural configuration that does not teach everybody to internalize and live in bad faith (Webber 2011, 191–92).

One problem with this defense of Sartre is that Webber does not specify exactly what he means by "culture" here. From what he says, one could interpret that he means something as wide as Western culture in general (with imprecise historical limits), or something as specific as the Parisian culture of the 1940s, when Sartre was writing *Being and Nothingness*. However, judging superficially by what one reads about "shame cultures" or "honor cultures" elsewhere, a very restrictive interpretation doesn't seem very plausible. But if shame is a product of bad faith, then bad faith must presumably be pervasive in so-called shame cultures. This significantly weakens Webber's defense of Sartre, as it extends the cultural problem much more widely that he seems to have intended. But this is a contingent, empirical matter. Why should it be a problem for his account? It is, because it points out to a deeper worry, namely, whether bad faith can really be reduced to a mere project, a project one can undertake or give up.[65] It does not seem very plausible to defend that the anguish and shame that we can come to feel in dealing with our freedom, responsibility, and interdependence are merely a cultural problem that we can solve by choosing authenticity. Further, it is dubious that, even within Western culture, relating to others through labels is constitutive of bad faith in all situations. One should distinguish between different types and spheres of encounters and relations with others, and also between different types of shame (Zahavi 2012) that can be experienced in them. We can at least distinguish among a public sphere, a private sphere, and an intimate sphere; and relating to others (or to oneself) through labels or stereotypes is not equally (in)appropriate in all of them. And indeed, the labels and stereotypes that are appropriate in one sphere are often not appropriate in the other. In the public sphere, for example, we relate to each other for the most past through labels, and bad faith does not have to intervene. In contrast, some types of human relations (of which love, very broadly construed, is one), in whichever culture they may happen, are such that, as I explain in the next section, they either make bad faith inoperative, or end up being destroyed by it.

LOVE, SHAME AND RECOGNITION

In order to further explore these issues, I now turn to Stanley Cavell's (1995) account of shame, which is one of the cornerstones of his reading of one of Shakespeare's best tragedies: *King Lear*. Through it I intend to test Webber's proposal as concerns shame and intersubjectivity. However, the main purpose of Cavell's essay is not to give an account of shame, but, precisely, to give a philosophical reading of Shakespeare's play, where his main concern is with our role as an audience and what we can learn as spectators of tragedy: with the way in which one ought to respond to extreme human suffering. His take on it, therefore, is greatly interested in issues of intersubjectivity and ethics. In order to interpret

[65] I am grateful to Arne Grøn for pressing this point.

Shakespeare, Cavell sketches an account of love, shame and recognition, which are the three key notions of his reading. The articulation of the three that he presents is highly interesting, and allows us to shed some light on the intersubjectivity of shame.

Particularly, Cavell's reading can illustrate to a certain extent Webber's idea that the stalled dialectics of our relations to others in shame is a product of bad faith, but as we will see, it also ends up showing how insufficient his account is for doing justice to shame. The central question that any reading of *King Lear* must try to answer is why does the tragedy happen? What does Lear do what he does in the abdication scene? In my view, according to Cavell's reading and to my Sartrean-Webberian interpretation of it, it is possible to argue that the tragedy of Lear comes about because Lear cannot abandon the project of bad faith. He has lived for many years as the king, fully identifying with that identity. That is what he takes himself to be, "the king": the powerful ruler, also the powerful father. But public identities carry public responsibilities with them, and at the beginning of the tragedy we encounter a king that has become too old to be able to fulfil his role successfully: the cloak and crown are too heavy and he can no longer sustain that identity before other people. His vassals see this incapacity, so his project of bad faith can no longer be sustained by the gaze of the others: self-concept and being-for-Others no longer coincide, so his pride starts to turn into shame. But if he stops being the king, then what is he? What is then left? Lear is unable to deal with this situation: he attempts to give up the heavy public responsibilities that attach to the role while retaining the title and still being treated as king. But how can he achieve this? Which gaze is going to sustain him as king when he can no longer do the job? Perhaps the gaze of those in power, he thinks— and those in power will be his daughters. So he then tries to make the intimate recognition of love fulfil the same role as the public recognition of a sovereign by his subjects. This, however, is an impossible and absurd endeavor. And when it does not work, he descends into a hell of shame and anguish from which he cannot emerge again. As in the cases of Mabel Waring and Gabriel Conroy, we find in Lear a mismatch between self-image and being-for-Others. But Lear of course is not Mabel Waring: love and politics complicate the picture.

King Lear is a tragedy about human fragility, like all tragedies, and in this case specifically about old age, about growing old and dependent and weak-minded, about the difficulties parents and children have in managing that transition, the strain it puts on their relationship, and the love that is required to keep loving under that strain. This is the main theme that unfolds and evolves throughout the play. Lear, the central character, and his vassal, the Earl of Gloucester, are parallel figures: two old men who fail to recognize loyalty and love and banish and disinherit their "good" children, in favor of their "evil" ones. The central plot is of course the story of Lear, with the Gloucester subplot providing a powerful

doubling that comments and expands on it. In the Lear plot, the characters are more extreme and pure, and their motives are less clear: in the play, we are given no explicit reason for Lear's behavior at the opening scene, the abdication scene, nor for the unambiguous hypocrisy and cruelty of Goneril and Regan; and there isn't a single trace of doubt or ambiguity in Cordelia's pure, enduring, endlessly forgiving love. In the Gloucester plot, all characters are slightly more nuanced and ambiguous (more ordinary, perhaps more human in this sense): Gloucester is ashamed of having fathered an illegitimate son, which complicates his relations to his two children; Edmund is given a reason to hate his father and brother; Edgar's love and loyalty towards his father are not perfectly pure.

To understand Cavell's interpretation of the play, and how he draws the conclusions he draws, one should take into account what he thinks about tragedy. Cavell shares the classical and Hegelian view that in tragedy a universal truth is embodied in an individual story. For Cavell (1995, 341), in tragedy we find a particular mixture of contingency and necessity: we are shown how a *particular* death, "which is neither natural nor accidental" came about. If it wasn't natural nor accidental, it could have been prevented: therein lies the contingency. But because of how the characters are and how events unfold, nobody knows how it could have been prevented, so there is a sense of necessity. As Cavell (1995, 341) writes, "it is the enveloping of contingency and necessity by one another, the entropy of their mixture, which produces events we call tragic." The mixture comes about through blindness and repetition. The tragic mistake, a universally human mistake, doesn't only happen once. Tragedy, and very specifically *King Lear*, shows us that

> ... our actions have consequences which outrun our best, and worst, intentions. The drama of *King Lear* not merely embodies this theme, it comments on it, even deepens it. For what it shows is that the *reason* consequences furiously hunt us down is not merely that we are half-blind, and unfortunate, but that we go on doing the thing which produced these consequences in the first place. What we need is not rebirth, or salvation, but the courage, or plain prudence, to see and to stop. (Cavell 1995, 309)

To anticipate something I will develop in a moment, according to Cavell, Lear's tragic mistake is succumbing to shame and thus desperately avoiding love. In other words, Lear denies his recognition to others and refuses to allow them to recognize him. And according to Cavell, this is the mistake that not only Lear, but also many other characters in the play, keep making again and again: the mistake that fuels the tragedy. Therefore, on the one hand, we acquire greater insight into shame and recognition and their structure through the various repetitions, and, on the other hand, Shakespeare

would be showing us (among other things) what the world is like when bad faith, shame and the avoidance of love reign supreme.

But what does Cavell mean when he says that Lear's tragic mistake is succumbing to shame and avoiding love? And how is this claim justified? Let me trace his reasoning, keeping in mind that the Gloucester plot functions as a commentary and expansion of the Lear plot. To begin with, Cavell focuses on two crucially climactic moments in the play, which are two moments of recognition. The first is Gloucester's realization of the mistake he made with Edgar, a realization that comes to him through torture, when Regan and her husband Cornwall pluck out Gloucester's eyes and tell him that it was Edmund who informed them of his father's intentions to join Cordelia's party, thus unleashing their vicious revenge. Only then does he see which one of his two sons was really a traitor. The second moment is Lear's recognition of Cordelia, when he temporarily comes out of his madness. These moments mark a realization and a recognition that had been absent before. The wrong both fathers had committed against their children was to not recognize them, to deny them recognition, and now they do. Recognition is climatic and extraordinary because it is the exception: what Lear does throughout the tragedy is to *not* recognize the others around him, to take them for what they are not.

But we knew this much. The question is: why did the old men not recognize their children before? After all, they were right in front of their eyes and they did not deceive them in any way. One important thing to note here is that the structure of recognition is not one-sided. According to Cavell (1995, 275), fully acknowledging the other implies self-recognition: it implies putting oneself in the other's presence, allowing oneself to be recognized. In the verses Cavell quotes, both fathers mention themselves first, and then their children:

> GLOUCESTER: … Oh my follies! Then Edgar was abused.
> Kind Gods, forgive me that, and prosper him! (III, *vii*, 90-91)

> LEAR: … Do not laugh at me;
> For, as I am a man, I think this lady
> To be my child Cordelia. (IV, *vii*, 68-70)

For both men, self-recognition comes first. They place themselves in the presence of the other, they present themselves, and then recognize the other. This is the only way in which it can happen: one cannot recognize the other while hiding from him, there is no such thing as secret or hidden recognition. And this is Cavell's crucial point. The problem for both Gloucester and Lear was precisely this: that they could not put themselves in the presence of the other, they could not allow themselves

to be recognized, and therefore they were unable to recognize their children. According to Cavell, then, "Lear's dominating motivation to this point, from the time things go wrong in the opening scene, is *to avoid being recognized*" (Cavell 1995, 274). This is what triggers the tragedy. He avoids others, particularly Cordelia, because he doesn't want to expose himself to their recognition.

But why does he not want to be recognized? Why should recognition be disagreeable or frightening? Recognition is more often than not discussed as something we aspire to, something we want from others, something we fight for even to death, according to Hegel (1976). Some claim, precisely, that love entails or even just is mutual recognition. The answer to this is that recognition is dangerous when one is afraid of what others might see, of what might be revealed to them; when one is ashamed, or afraid of shame:

> But if the failure to recognize others is a failure to let others recognize you, a fear of what is revealed to them, an avoidance of their eyes, then it is exactly shame which is the cause of his withholding recognition. ... For shame is the specific discomfort produced by the sense of being looked at, the avoidance of the sight of others is the reflex it produces. (Cavell 1995, 277–78)

Gloucester (Lear's double) says it at the very beginning while talking to Kent about Edmund: he is ashamed of having fathered a bastard son, and this is a shame that pervades his relations not just to Edmund, but to Edgar too, because it taints his image as an exemplary father. But what about Lear? Where does his shame come from? Why is he so afraid of being revealed to others? What shameful thing is there to be revealed? In answering this question, what comes to the surface is the shame of vulnerability and old age, but deeper than this, the shame of being a fragile, mortal man.

Let me clarify, however, that Lear is not simply ashamed of being old. The Shakespearean text does not restrict itself to the problems of old age, but speaks about the general wretchedness and fragility of the human condition as such. And as I said in the previous section, this resonates with Lévinas' account of shame in *On Escape*, with his idea that shame reveals the totality of our being as insufficient, the constitutive and inescapable vulnerability of human existence. In *King Lear* this theme appears throughout, notably in Lear's exchanges with the Fool and with Edgar disguised as a beggar. But there is a moment of special import, when Lear comes face to face with Gloucester, and recognizes him. Given the centrality of recognition in the Cavellian account of the play, it is no small matter that the first person Lear recognizes, and therefore the first person he allows himself to be recognized by, is Gloucester, whose eyes have just been plucked out by Regan and Cornwall. Indeed, in this encounter, Lear cruelly teases him about his eyes, "as if to make sure they are really gone" (Cavell 1995, 280), and only then comes the recognition: "If thou wilt weep my fortunes, take my eyes. / I know thee well

enough; thy name is Gloucester" (IV, *vi*, 165-66). This is a moment of special intensity, because at that point their fates have become so similar that for Cavell they are no longer parallel, they are the same. So that what we have here is a moment of self-recognition:

> Lear is confronted here with the direct consequences of his conduct, of his covering up in rage and madness, of his having given up authority and kingdom for the wrong motives, to the wrong people; and he is for the first time confronting himself. ... So that what comes to the surface in this meeting is not a related story, but Lear's submerged mind. This, it seems to me, is what gives the scene its particular terror and gives to the characters what neither could have alone. In this fusion of plots and identities, we have the great image, the double or mirror image, of everyman who has gone to every length to avoid himself caught at the moment of coming upon himself face to face. (Cavell 1995, 280)

At this point Gloucester has acknowledged what he did to Edgar and accepts his horrible fate as punishment for that. He is perfectly lucid. But Lear is mad, he will be mad until the end, and before the great realization that only comes once Cordelia is dead ("I might have saved her," V, *iii*, 319), he never comes closer to confronting the consequences of his actions. Everything he says around Gloucester in this scene of self-confrontation makes it clear that Lear, stripped off crown and royal cloak, feels worthless of anybody's love, as is obvious when he rejects Gloucester's offer of affection and respect:

> GLOUCESTER: O, let me kiss that hand!
> KING LEAR: Let me wipe it first; it smells of mortality. (IV, *vi*, 125-26)

Lear the mortal man (anybody stripped down to bare humanity) is too wretched to deserve love (see Cavell 1995, 289). So much so that love seems like an unattainable ideal, or worse, a deception: an elevated name for a sordid reality. During this scene, Lear declares all forms of love and loyalty to be base, hollow and worthless, particularly the love of children for parents, the love that produces children, and the loyalty of servants and vassals. It is not difficult to read this in the framework that Webber sets: Lear is all the while in bad faith. He cannot keep being the king, and if he cannot be king, what else is there to be recognized? Only a fragile, indigent old man, as he sees it. Why would anybody love such a wretched, undeserving being? He may place himself in somebody else's presence, in Cordelia's presence, allowing her to recognize him—and seeing his wretchedness, she might deny him. And so she will, because what is there to be loved? This is what is unbearable.

However, the deeper problem is in fact a different one. The way I have been formulating the issue, it seems a problem of labelling mismatch: under the label "king," Lear feels lovable. Under the label "old

man," he feels wretched and undeserving. This fear and this danger are present, as I will argue below. But they would imply a misunderstanding of love, a misunderstanding of what Cordelia is offering, or perhaps a fear of imperfect love. The deeper problem is a problem of what Sartre would call authenticity: Lear cannot assume his freedom and the responsibility it entails, a responsibility which is underlined by love, because love places an immeasurable demand on us: it entails a call we have to respond to. And this is something that Lear cannot do: he feels too weak and wretched to be able to return love. For returning love is not a matter of giving material things to the other, it is a matter of being open and responsive to her, of placing oneself in her presence; it means allowing oneself to be recognized, revealing oneself without a protective label, without a crown or a royal cloak, just naked. There is one vexed question; the question is why. Why, if all human beings are fragile, doesn't everyone act like Lear. And if this is a universal condition, why does Lear have such problems dealing with his fragility? Why does he cling to bad faith in such a way?

Here something more should be said about love and recognition. What do these words mean? Does one entail the other? In Cavell's text, at least two senses of recognition are at play: recognition in the Hegelian sense of *Anerkennung* and recognition in the Aristotelian sense of *anagnorisis*. Recognition as *Anerkennung* refers to an intersubjective encounter where one subject acknowledges the other as such—a step which, according to Hegel (1976), is necessary for one to become a subject in the full sense of the word, and which necessarily has to be reciprocal: only because I recognize the other as free can she confirm my own freedom in her recognition. On the other hand, recognition as *anagnorisis* is a concept that comes from Aristotle's *Poetics* (1454b19), and it refers to the specific moment in a tragedy when a character discovers her own true identity, such as when Oedipus finds out that it was him who killed his father and slept with his mother. The moment of *anagnorisis* is crucial in tragedy: it is what tragedy moves towards, and it always comes too late (often, like for Oedipus, at the beginning it is already too late). Cavell here intertwines both senses, and makes them appear as two sides of the same coin, where no recognition of the other is possible without self-recognition, and in recognizing the other, one comes to acknowledge one's own self.

Now, as Antonio Gómez Ramos (forthcoming) reminds us, there is here the further, crucial, question of what is recognized in recognition of the other (or of oneself, for that matter). Do we recognize her identity as a property or a collection of properties? Or do we recognize her as a free singular subject? In a very simplified manner, being free, for Hegel, means "not to be bound to life," to the life cycle of desire, consumption and destruction, but instead to be autonomous, "to have one's own criteria and to have authority over them" (Gómez Ramos forthcoming, sec. 3). Public identities and roles are ways of not being bound to life, but they don't singularize us. A provisional answer would then be that both

kinds of recognition are possible, and in some situations the recognition of identity is all that is needed and appropriate (the recognition of Lear as king by his subjects, while he is still able to fulfil that political role, would be one of those situations). This is why I said at the end of the previous section that labels are not inappropriate nor do they imply bad faith in all contexts. But mistaking the kinds of recognition that are appropriate in each sphere is the beginning of bad faith. In this connection, it should be noted that *King Lear* is also a political play, and it comments and reflects on the negotiations between the public and the intimate spheres. The process of recognition is not identical in both, and it does not entail the same kind of link and mutual responsibilities and claims.

One can be recognized abstractly, in terms of a property or set of properties, which often can be seen as one's own achievement, something one can be proud of: "I am the king," "I am a good citizen," "I am a good professional," "I am the knight in shining armor." A part of what we are is captured by those labels, but precisely because they are abstract, they do not capture our singularity, what makes each individual singular and irreplaceable. According to Gómez Ramos, the minimal degree of recognition happens at this abstract level and consists in being recognized as a human being,[66] while "the maximal is to be recognized as oneself, as the event of a subjective achievement that one is. Not that one simply belongs to a universal genus, but that one is, as Hegel puts it, a genus in itself. Someone singular - *Einzeln*" (Gómez Ramos forthcoming, sec. 4). In the public sphere, recognition is generally of the abstract kind, and it has to do with the ascription of a set of rights and responsibilities that go with the role(s) one assumes: the Minister for Education, the philosophy professor, the spouse, the parent, the citizen. The crucial thing here is the role and rights and responsibilities that attach to it, not the singularity of the person that is fulfilling them. This is precisely the sense of the royal proclamation "The king is dead, long live the king!" that is part of the burial rites performed for the monarch in many countries: the role outlives the individual that plays it and is independent of that individual. In stark contrast, in intimacy and love one needs to be recognized in one's singularity. What is at stake there are not the abstract duties, responsibilities and claims that generally hold for fathers and daughters, for example, but the unique loving relation between two singular subjects in all its specificity. As I suggested above in passing, Lear's problem is that he mixes up these two spheres. He is no longer strong enough to be recognized as king by his vassals, and in order to maintain the identity he has adopted, he tries to sneak in the intimate recognition of love to do the job. His daughters' public declarations of love are supposed to allow him to still be treated as king, with none of the encumbrances of the role. But love cannot do the political job: mixing these two spheres in this way

[66] As Arne Grøn points out to me, being recognized as a human being might already imply the recognition of a peculiar singularity and transcendence. There is much left to be discussed about recognition, but that would be a topic for a different project.

corrupts them both (see Cavell 1995, 295–96). Cordelia knows it, and refuses to let her love be corrupted.

Let us accept, with Cavell, that Lear is afraid of not deserving the love he needs and craves, and not being able to return the love he receives, that he is ashamed of his wretched being. But why this fear when he knows—and he does know—that Cordelia loves him? (see Cavell 1995, 290). One could already anticipate the twofold answer. On the one hand, Lear cringes before the possibility of being denied, of being fixated as "the fragile old man" and rejected, or treated as less than a free subject, an individual with no authority over himself and whose decisions need to be made for him, a senile, dependent old man. So in this sense the lack of autonomy is something to fear. On the other hand, he is unable to return love, unable to assume his freedom and the responsibility it entails. According to Cavell's (1995, 283–85) reading, the other "good child" in this tale, Edgar, would illustrate the perils of the first possibility, while Cordelia would illustrate those of the second: through Edgar we learn about the dangers of being fixated in an identity, through Cordelia we learn about the burden of love, with its infinite demands and responsibilities towards the other. There is no doubt that Edgar loves his father, but his love has limits, it is not pure and unmixed, as is Cordelia's. One difficulty here is that, despite the centrality of the concept in his essay, Cavell never spells out what he means by love, what it requires and entails—he simply takes it for granted. But the concept is far from obvious or univocal, and the emotion (or sentiment, or disposition) is immensely complex.

Love comes in many varieties and it has been the subject of countless philosophical explorations since Plato's *Symposium* at the very least, including recently some eliminativist and reductionist attempts (see Goldie 2010 for an overview and refutation). Giving a summary of the different accounts of love available, let alone attempting an account of love itself, would take me much too far from the purposes of this study. But the relevant question that needs to be raised at this point is: what role does recognition play in love?[67] Does love require mutual recognition? Harry Frankfurt, for instance, thinks that love is a structure of the will, "an involuntary, nonutilitarian, rigidly focused, and—as in any mode of caring—self-affirming concern for the existence and the good of what is loved" (Frankfurt 2006, 40), and in that sense it is fully private, self-defining and entirely independent of reciprocity. To love someone or something is to act wholeheartedly (i.e. in accordance to my will) to foster what I take to

[67] Another vastly complex issue is distinguishing among the many varieties of love, and again, tackling it is outside of the scope of my study here. However, my remarks in what follows are intended to apply to various kinds of interpersonal love, but not, or not immediately, to love for inanimate objects, such as things, places, activities, works of art and so on (I would find it very unsatisfactory to include infants and animals in this group, but given the account of recognition I have sketched, some adjustments, or clarifications, would be necessary). In any case, as with shame, I am very skeptical that it may be possible to subsume all different kinds of love under a single, phenomenologically accurate, analysis.

be the good of my beloved. But Frankfurt has been criticized for this self-centered account. Isn't openness to the other a necessary element of love, at least of love between people? On many other accounts, mutual recognition, the perfect mutual recognition of two subjects, is indispensable for love. But this seems too demanding: would we want to say that unreturned love is not love at all? As I said, it is not totally clear where Cavell stands, but it is also obvious that the notion of recognition is crucial for him, at least in its dimension of openness to the other. In what follows I will show that he allows for the possibility that love is still present through failures of recognition, so the presence of a form of care or concern similar to what Frankfurt describes would be enough to speak of love of an imperfect kind at least. However, his interpretation of the ending of *King Lear* and of Cordelia's death strongly suggests that, according to him, love in the full sense of the word, what I will call "perfect" love, necessarily entails placing oneself in the presence of the other, allowing oneself to be recognized in an intimate sphere, as the naked singular individual that one is. It implies giving up bad faith entirely, or at least to the maximum extent possible, before one's beloved. This is not so easy, though, and his analysis of Edgar's relationship to his father, Gloucester, allows for the possibility that some degree of loving or love-like concern, perhaps even a high one, remains through attempts to hide more or less partially from the other: ambivalence and imperfection do not entirely preclude love. But truly loving implies openness to the other, placing oneself naked and defenseless in her presence.

The obstacle to perfect love, of course, is the great difficulty we human beings have in dealing with our vulnerability and wretchedness. According to Cavell (1995, 283–85), Edgar's attitude towards Gloucester shows us the limitations and dangers of love. Edgar, disguised as a beggar, acts as a guide to his blind father and averts his attempt at suicide, repeatedly making side remarks about how his heart breaks at seeing Gloucester suffer so much in his miserable state. But he knows all the while that the old man's greatest suffering does not come from his wounds or his state of poverty, but from being unable to place himself before Edgar and acknowledge his mistake to him. Gloucester longs to encounter his older son and ask for his forgiveness, and he says so before a disguised Edgar:

> ... Ah dear son Edgar,
> The food of thy abused father's wrath!
> Might I but live to see thee in my touch,
> I'd say I had eyes again! (IV, *i*, 24-27)

Gloucester is saying that his misery, his very blindness, would be gone if he could reunite himself with the son he wronged.[68] And yet, Edgar keeps Gloucester in the dark and does not reveal himself to his father until much later, at the very end, when the old man is dying and Edgar has found the army that is marching against his brother Edmund, Regan and Goneril. He is going to join the soldiers, and only then he reveals himself to his father, only once he is dressed and armed again, fully equipped to reclaim his inheritance from the hands of his traitor brother. Why does he wait and prolong his father's suffering? According to Cavell, this delay is a cruel avoidance of recognition:

> He cannot bear the fact that his father is incapable, impotent, maimed. He wants his father still to be a father, powerful, so that he can remain a child. For otherwise they are simply two human beings in need of one another, and it is not usual for parents and children to manage that transformation, becoming for one another nothing more, but nothing less, than unaccommodated men. (Cavell 1995, 284–85)

In my view, if this is correct, Edgar is also trapped in bad faith and shame: when his circumstances do not allow him to sustain the identity he aspires to, he hides from others and avoids them, even if it means hurting the father he (imperfectly) loves, refusing to honor the responsibilities and claims of love. So Gloucester would by now have learned to love, to expose himself naked, and Edgar would be fixating him in a role, attributing him a label, an undesirable one, one that Edgar cannot live with.

But is this Cavellian reading not too uncharitable to Edgar? The Shakespearean text shows that Edgar hesitates and is about to reveal himself several times: his concealment is not an easy one, he also longs for love. One could interpret that it is not out of cruelty or the fear of his own shame that he does this: it is out of his sense of shame, out of delicacy towards his father, to protect Gloucester from the shame of being seen as a poor blind beggar, or from the even greater shame of unequivocally seeing that he has reduced his loyal son to that same state. Edgar, one could argue, doesn't want to add these further shames to his father's other sources of suffering, so he doesn't reveal himself until he is able to cut a figure that his father can be proud of. In the meantime, he hides because he loves him.[69] This is true in the sense that Edgar is a very complex, and very human, character, and even though he may love imperfectly, like most of us, there is no denying that he deeply cares about his father. But there is still something patronizing about his attitude (Edgar decides unilaterally what is good for both him and Gloucester), and the structure would still be one of bad faith: of labelling and being labelled and identifying with those labels as if they were one's true nature. It assumes that Gloucester cannot

[68] This is metaphorically accurate, since in confronting Edgar he would have the chance to see him for what he always was: to give the recognition he withheld at the beginning.
[69] Thanks to Annemarie van Stee for pressing this point.

sustain his own freedom or that of his son. The problem is that, as I said above, abstract recognition of this kind, recognition of labels, does not capture our singularity, and another generally accepted feature of love is that love is *de re*, as Peter Goldie (2010, 64) puts it: it attaches to one singular object that cannot be replaced by another object with the exact same characteristics (if my beloved dies, I cannot transfer my love to her identical twin). Bad faith, therefore, undermines the kind of recognition that is central to love, the recognition of the free, singular subject, the recognition that does not depend on ascribing labels to the other. So in both interpretations of Edgar's behavior, his love is contaminated to a certain degree, it is imperfect and ambivalent; neither of them, father or son, receives the love they need, and both are hurt. In such a context of bad faith, then, the risk of exposing oneself to recognition is great, and this is why "there are no lengths to which we may not go in order to avoid being revealed, even to those we love and are loved by. Or rather, especially to those we love and are loved by: to other people it is easy not to be known" (Cavell 1995, 284). When one is in bad faith, it is unbearable to be stripped of one's cloak, of one's role, to place oneself naked in the presence of the other. A concern, even a profound concern, for the good of the beloved remains, but this good is interpreted in the lover's own terms, with no need for communication with the beloved, and the intimate face-to-face relationship with the other becomes fraught with misunderstandings. But is bad faith the only possibility?

After all, Edgar has reasons of his own to feel ashamed and guilty too: he was gullible as well, he let himself be fooled by Edmund, and instead of trusting his father's love, he fled without confronting him. He has his own reasons to hide. In sharp contrast, Cordelia never did this: she always offered unambiguous, perfect love. Indeed, it could be argued that "to love is all she knows how to do" (Cavell 1995, 292), and therefore, unlike her sisters, she is completely inept for politics, for the public sphere of abstract recognition and power. In the Cavellian reading of the abdication scene (Cavell 1995, 290–93), Lear is not deceived. He knows material things are by no means the response that love demands. But love is not what he asks of his daughters, because perfect love and recognition are too dangerous, as we have seen. What he asks is for an assurance, a commitment, that they will keep behaving as if he was wearing the crown and being the powerful father, even though he can no longer be those things. His kingdom is an adequate payment for tragic theater, but not for love: not for Cordelia's love. To formulate it in terms of my Sartrean-Webberian reading, Cordelia is the only authentic person in a universe of bad faith, and because of this, and because of Lear's inability to abandon this universe, he sacrifices her to his bad faith. So in the end, her death shows that the risk of loving is very real: one risks one's life and, if the beloved doesn't sustain it, one pays with it (Cavell 1995, 297–301). As Cavell (1995, 286) remarks, because of the structure of what I have called perfect love, which entails

openness to the other and mutual recognition, and because of its fragility, "families, any objects of one's love and commitment, ought to be the places where shame is overcome (hence happy families are all alike); but they are also the places of its deepest manufacture." Indeed, Cordelia's purity supports the idea that bad faith goes much deeper than a project that can be given up—it might be unavoidable for us who have to negotiate relations to others in different spheres. Cordelia's purity is so powerful because it is much more than a fairy-tale idealization: it is an exceptional mirror in which to look at the limits of the human condition and of human love (which tends to come closer to Edgar), while still remaining a human possibility (cases of sacrifice are not the norm, but they happen often enough).[70]

What have we learned about shame from this long journey into Shakespeare and the intricacies of love and recognition? The main conclusion is that Webber's proposal, although it works well in some cases, is too narrow to account for the workings of shame in all cases, and therefore cannot save Sartre's account of intersubjectivity in the way he wants. It still needs to be expanded. In my reading, some elements of the abdication scene make it a good example of shame as a product of bad faith. It is a situation where shame arises because the self-identity one wants to appropriate in bad faith is undermined or contradicted by the objectification, the determination, the label implied in the gaze of others (the gaze of the vassals on their fragile old king). In these cases, the sense of self that is at stake in shame would be the self of fixed identity labels that are under threat or contradicted. This comes very close to the account of the self of shame given by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni, which I have argued against in previous chapters. The language of objectification would tempt us to interpret things in this way. But abstract objectification in terms of a (supposed) "view from nowhere" is not the shame as objectification from a second-person perspective, from being the object of someone else's experience. This is the crucial, Sartrean, difference: in the picture I have just presented, the other, the gaze of the other, understood as Sartre does, is always implied in the experience of shame. It is a second-person objectification. The existence of specific others around me that have access to a dimension of myself that is out of my own self-reflective control is a necessary condition of possibility for shame to appear. What is crucial to shame, rather than being assessed in a specific manner or labelled in a specific way, is just the lack of control, the lack of the capacity to determine a dimension of my being, because it escapes me.

We can see this in Lear's relation to Cordelia, which, in my view, reveals a first problem with Webber's proposal. If the love she offers is perfect in the sense I have defended, her love implies the recognition

[70] Again, I am grateful to Arne Grøn for pressing this point.

of Lear's singularity and freedom; if she is offering to love him just as he is, without a further reason (without any royal cloak, or power, or pomp), it is not fixation and objectification that she is offering, but the opposite: confirmation of him as a free subject. She is offering a nurturing and supportive relationship of the kind Guenther (2011, 27) finds missing from *Being and Nothingness*. The Hegelian twist is that I also need the other to be free, or rather, I need the other for my freedom to be meaningful and real. So the gaze of the other can do these two things: it can objectify me, label me and deny my singularity, or it can confirm me in my freedom. Cordelia's is not an objectifying gaze, but its opposite: it is a recognition of his freedom. Despite this, Lear still feels shame before it most of the time, so this means that there are forms of shame that do not fixate us in a particular role. Now, why should the recognition of my freedom be shameful? The answer is that freedom can be a heavy burden: it entails the need to take responsibility for ourselves and our actions, assume our responsibility towards the other. This is the claim of love that Lear cannot respond to, an inability that causes him shame, and that he covers up in bad faith as a way of shunning responsibility. Shame would then turn out not to be exclusively a function of the other objectifying me, but more generally a function of the other having a certain power to shape who I am independently of my own control. The other can place herself before me confirming my freedom, and I may want to run away from it in anguish and shame. In this case, the direction of effect seems to be reversed: shame is not a product of bad faith, but the other way around. Shame gives rise to bad faith as a way of hiding away from the claims that the other places on me. A mechanism like this might be at play sometimes when we see a beggar in the street and we feel ashamed before her wretched condition (regardless of whether we choose to ignore her or give her a few coins). Webber does not take this possibility into account.

Another problem with Webber's account is one that I mentioned in relation to other accounts as well: it is too cognitively demanding and does not retain the connection to the body that Sartre's account preserves. It stays at the level of features and labels, which disregards one of the crucial dimensions of emotion. But Webber departs from Sartre in yet another important way. Indeed, Sartre himself seems to contradict the possibility of interpreting shame as a product of bad faith, where he describes pride, but not shame, in these terms, and actually claims that shame is authentic:

> In short there are two authentic attitudes: that by which I recognise the Other as the subject through whom I get my object-ness—this is shame; and that by which I apprehend myself as the free project by which the Other gets his being-other—this is arrogance or the affirmation of my freedom confronting the Other-as-object. But pride—or vanity—is a feeling without equilibrium, and it is in bad faith. (Sartre 1969, 290)

The bad faith of vanity consists in my trying to control the other through my object-ness. I present myself before the other as an object with such and such desirable characteristics, and thus I try to manipulate the other subject into admiring me for them, into fixating me thus and confirming me in them. In this structure, I don't properly recognize anybody's freedom: I try to mask my own by presenting myself as an object and manipulate the other's by trying to steer her impressions of me. By contrast, Sartre claims that shame is an authentic attitude: in it, I do properly recognize the other as free and I do not pretend to have any kind of control over her view of me. That is the touchstone of shame, as I will argue. The structure of shame in bad faith that Webber devises is parallel to the structure of vanity as Sartre describes it: when the manipulation of vanity fails, shame ensues. That is exactly what happens to Lear at the beginning of the tragedy, when Cordelia refuses to play his little game and exposes the hypocrisy of it. But shame is not a product of bad faith in all situations.

In contrast, Cordelia herself has been described as being deeply ashamed in that same scene (see Taylor 1985, 62–63; and Welz 2014, 109–112 for a helpful commentary), mainly as a result of his father corrupting her love. That would be the shame of someone who is *not* in bad faith, someone who, on the intimate level, can allow herself to be recognized and can sustain her father's love, and who sees herself fixated as (and reduced to) someone who would be ready to corrupt that love in exchange for land and power, as if she loved him because of the material things he can give her. As if love was ever a function of those things. Shame, then, can be a product of the other fixating me also when I'm not in bad faith, of the other not sustaining my freedom. This is the result of endorsing the Hegelian idea that mutual recognition is necessary for freedom. At any rate, what all these instances of shame seem to have in common is the apprehension that a whole dimension of my being escapes me. So, in my view, the 'object-ness' we experience as constitutive of ourselves in shame does not amount exclusively to bad faith, i.e. to labelling, but to situatedness and embodiment, as León (2013) defends reading Sartre. Situatedness makes us liable to receiving labels and being fixated by descriptions, and it also makes the meaning and accomplishment of our freedom depend on the other's recognition. Thus, Webber's reading can apply to some instances of shame, but not all of them, and therefore it doesn't give us all we need to move beyond the stalled dialectic that Sartre established as the only possibilities for intersubjectivity. A more promising way is to fully embrace and articulate the idea that I need the other to be free.

Another issue is that the Webberian account would seem to take us right back to an interpretation of shame as counterproductive through and through, as a by-product of failing to assume our freedom and responsibility. But is it not possible to find a sense of agency in shame, to appropriate it or endorse it somehow, to make it transformative? (see Guenther 2011; Guenther 2012; Morgan 2008). This is an

issue I will explore in depth through another sustained literary reading in my next chapter. Nonetheless, I would like to repeat that, as Dan Zahavi (2012, 311–12) has defended, I believe that shame is not a unitary phenomenon: there are different varieties of shame, and not all of them can be accounted for in the exact same way. Not all of them are so negative or destructive of our freedom and responsibility. As I argue in the next two chapters, some might help us reappropriate them.

CHAPTER 4
SHAME, SELF-DECEIT AND CARING: THE CASE OF J. M. COETZEE'S *DISGRACE*[71]

This chapter is an interlude of sorts in the theoretical development of this dissertation. In it, I collect, apply, rehearse and develop the insights on shame gained in previous chapters into an extended literary reading, before spelling out my conclusions in chapter 5. My literary piece of choice is the short novel *Disgrace* by Nobel prize laureate J. M. Coetzee (1999), which for political reasons was highly controversial at the time of its publication in South Africa, and is widely acknowledged as one of his masterpieces. My reading will roughly follow the order of narration, because the novel depicts the development of its main character through a meaningful trajectory of emotional and ethical learning that I find useful to mirror here. I will start by justifying my interpretation in terms of shame and then proceed on to the reading, focusing on three crucial phases that illustrate three different kinds of shame, or three different ways of experiencing it. The novel, however, contains a myriad nuances, and some cases are ambiguous or multi-layered. But before I go into my reading, let me briefly recall my previous discussions and the point to which my study had arrived in the previous chapter.

SHAME AND RELATIONALITY

After exploring the main elements of current accounts of shame in chapter 1, and reviewing several ways of dealing with it as a moral emotion in chapter 2, in chapter 3 I investigated carefully the structure of the experience of shame, and emphasized that shame is not exclusively a function of the other imposing a particular label on me, but more generally a function of the other having a certain power to shape who I am independently of my own control, of having a whole dimension of my being outside of me. This formulation is basically the same as Sartre's (1969), but I would like to move beyond his negative view of intersubjectivity by taking on board the insight, based on some central ideas of Hegel and the mature Lévinas, that my freedom depends on the other, that it has to be nurtured and supported by her before anyone can challenge it (Guenther 2011, 27), that it acquires

[71] This chapter was initially written as a paper, as yet unpublished, that I presented at different stages at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, CSIC (Madrid) and The University of Manchester, where I greatly benefited from the comments of the audiences. I would like to thank Carlos Thiebaut and José Medina, whose help on this chapter is not adequately reflected in the footnotes.

meaning through responsibility, through the fact that I have to respond to someone. As I argued discussing Cavell (1995), love and shame are not quite so alien to each other as one might initially think. Shame always entails, and it can make us aware of, a level of dependence on each other: as I concluded at the end of chapter 3, it is not just a by-product of the project of bad faith, of applying labels to each other and to ourselves and identifying with them. This was an insight of the analysis of *King Lear* through the Cavellian lens, and I will develop it further in this chapter. Indeed, some of the authors who defend shame in other terms can be read as arguing that it is valuable precisely because it helps guard against processes like self-deceit and Sartrean bad faith. There is at least one important kind of shame that seems to do this job:

> …the shame which the just man experiences when confronted by a crime committed by another, and he feels remorse because of its existence, because of its having been irrevocably introduced into the world of existing things, and because his will has proven nonexistent or feeble and was incapable of putting up a good defense. (Levi 1989, 72–73)

This is the shame that Michael Morgan (2008) proposes we ought to cultivate and mobilize as a right response to the genocides of our history and our present, and I think Coetzee would agree. Indeed, Morgan thinks that shame can be an antidote against the temptation to shun responsibility through self-excusing narratives and labels. Shame, if he is right, can shake us out of self-deceit and approach us to a clearer view of ourselves. According to Antonio Gómez Ramos (2005, 25–26), this type of shame does not come from focusing on one's own shortcomings and insufficiencies, it comes from confronting the suffering and the fragility of the other, which reveal to me my responsibility and the ambiguity of my position. It has to do, in a Lévinasian twist, with confronting the consequences of my freedom. The look of the distressed other can, among other things, send me back upon myself in this way. Gómez Ramos draws this insight from his reading of J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the Barbarians* (2004), a novel where ethics and self-knowledge are linked in complex and interesting ways to the body, to the humiliated body, the body in pain, and to shame. *Disgrace* shares many of the same themes and reflections, but developed, perhaps, in a yet richer and deeper way.

The aim of this chapter is to advance my investigation into the workings of shame even further beyond the mechanism that Webber (2011) describes in terms of bad faith by bringing the questions about ethical learning back into the picture. But as I said at the beginning, in many ways this chapter is an interlude, a recapitulation and illustration of the concepts and ideas advanced in previous chapters through a sustained literary reading. Thus, in what follows I join the threads of such discussions into an exploration of Coetzee's *Disgrace* (1999). Instead of presenting my philosophical elaboration first and using the literary work as illustration, I will go directly into my reading of *Disgrace* and

subsequently develop philosophical insights from the "case study." Through an in-depth reading of Coetzee's novel I will unearth some of the workings of shame and evaluate some of its possible contributions to ethical deliberation, behavior, judgment and character. My strategy, in short, consists in drawing some conclusions about shame from my reading of the novel. This poses a question that some readers might have asked themselves already in previous chapters and that I only addressed briefly in the Introduction: why use fiction in this way? What kind of insights can we get from a novel? And why choose specifically Coetzee's *Disgrace*? Let me answer these questions in turn.

ON THE ROLE OF LITERATURE IN THE STUDY OF EMOTION

Concerning the first question— why study emotions in general, in this case shame, through fiction, and what insights can a novel offer— I will not give any original arguments, but merely endorse what a few other authors have already said. As many have argued, fiction is a source of puzzles and examples that usually come much closer to life than, say, thought experiments (and even some stylized empirical results), which is an advantage for the study of emotions. Indeed, novelist Siri Hustvedt (2012, chap. 5) claims that the only truth that fiction has to respect is emotional truth: fiction can depict the most improbable facts, but in order to succeed it needs to stay true to emotion. A fantastic narrative that is emotionally true will make us suspend disbelief and be touched. A realistic narrative that is emotionally false will strike us as artificial, fake and difficult, if not impossible, to take seriously. Therefore, good fiction that engages us is a fertile terrain to explore our emotional life, because it speaks directly to it. But Bernard Williams goes further than this when he defends literary fiction as an excellent—perhaps the best—terrain to explore our intuitions about emotions, when he claims that "what philosophers will lay before themselves and their readers as an alternative to literature will not be life, but bad literature" (Williams 2008, 13). He seems to be saying that in order to study emotions and their meanings philosophically, we have no choice but to resort to narratives, in one way or another. Narratives seem to be the best way to articulate the meaning of human emotion, and would be indispensable for reaching a complex understanding of it. Different versions of a similar view can be found in Ronald de Sousa (1990), Dan Hutto (2008) and Peter Goldie (2000; 2012) (Goldie was once Williams' student.

Peter Goldie's views on emotion and narrative attained their more nuanced development in his posthumous book *The Mess Inside* (Goldie 2012), where he argues for the crucial role that what he calls "narrative thinking" has in making sense of ourselves and of our lives. For Goldie, narrative thinking is

not reducible to causal, or any other kind of, thinking. It is essentially perspectival, and represents actions and events as imbued with a certain degree of coherence, meaningfulness and evaluative and emotional import (see Goldie 2012, chap. 1). According to Goldie, one of the main ways we have of learning from experience and planning for the future involves narrative thinking and counterfactual thinking: envisaging various possible scenarios and thinking them through narratively. When we are reexamining events in our past in order to learn from them, or planning for the future, we typically imagine one or several points at which things can go one way or another, depending on our decisions or on external circumstances. From that point, several scenarios can open up (or could have opened up), like branches from a tree. These are what Goldie calls branching possibilities. They help us see where we went wrong and formulate policies that can become internalized with time: after some time, some courses of action will no longer present themselves as viable options for the agent. Goldie, in an Aristotelian spirit, defends that learning to be ethical involves among other things some kind of emotional education, specifically, having appropriate and proportionate emotional responses. Fiction helps us enrich the range of branching possibilities and shape our emotional responses to them:

> Through gaining insight into the mistakes—and the right actions—of fictional characters, and through responding emotionally as audience to what happens to the characters in the narrative, we come also to have appropriate external emotional responses, seeing branching possibilities opening up—or closing down—as the narrative moves forward in narrated time. (Goldie 2012, 92)

Any work of literature that engages us contributes to shape our ethical horizon in this way.

Further, ethical learning is not just about learning how to act, but also how to respond as a spectator. In his essay on *King Lear*, Stanley Cavell (1995) argues that responding to tragedy entails placing ourselves before the characters as in front of real people: taking them and their plight seriously, doing our part of the movement of recognition, which involves recognizing and allowing oneself to be recognized, as we saw in the previous chapter. Only that way can we learn anything from tragedy and does it become meaningful, only that way can we understand its cathartic power. In my view, the same applies to all fiction. And as happens in our relations with people, this is something that we more or less consciously choose to do or not to do; it is not the only option, the only way of receiving narratives or relating to them.[72] If in reading a novel or watching a film or a play we do not make that movement of recognition, this could mean that we only want to be entertained; or it could perhaps be due to an intellectual resistance with critical aims, as in Brecht, or simply be a product of cynicism. What I want

[72] Of course, some works are more inviting than others, just as some people are more inviting than others. Aesthetic or artistic quality might have something to do with that, but I will not speculate on this further.

to acknowledge here is that recognizing the characters as people and allowing oneself to be recognized by them, as Cavell proposes, is only one way of receiving a story, and there are other ways.[73] But it is the one that can more easily enlarge our horizon of branching possibilities and lead to some kind of ethical learning. This is the perspective I will adopt in what follows, trying to treat the characters, notably the main character, in *Disgrace* as people, and see what the exploration of their experiences can tell us about shame and ethical learning.

DISGRACE BY J. M. COETZEE

The second question I asked was why focus on *Disgrace* in particular. To a large extent the choice is of course contingent, a matter of personal taste, as there are other works of literature that could illuminate my study of shame. But the choice is also perfectly justified by the themes Coetzee develops in the novel, by the centrality and ethical relevance of shame and its familial relatives in the development of the main character, and by the mastery and insight with which Coetzee explores them. Indeed, according to Alice Crary (2010), the South-African Nobel laureate is one of the most profound ethical thinkers of the last fifty years. Many of his essays and novels explore serious ethical dilemmas in contexts where a whole society has been deprived of its moral compass, so that people no longer have reliable social conventions by which to guide themselves. The capacity of emotions to track values means that they can provide some guidance, and therefore they become especially important and salient. As we will see in what follows, shame is essential in such cases. *Disgrace* in particular deals in a complex, unsettling and immensely nuanced way with the main ethical dilemmas of post-apartheid South Africa; indeed, its central question is one that has preoccupied Coetzee throughout much of his work: how to be a white man in that particular context. However, my aim in this chapter is not to make sense of the novel's political positions in its political context, but to read it as an extended reflection on the workings of emotion in ethics and in moral learning, paying special attention to shame. In many ways, as is the case of much of Coetzee's work, *Disgrace* is a deep and enigmatic meditation on how to be, or learn to be, moral in a world where all public moral standards have been destroyed.

[73] Obviously, as Cavell himself claims, the reciprocity of recognition cannot be actualized in this case. But this is a contingency that does not apply to fiction only: it also applies, for example, to stories that we hear in news reports, whose protagonists for various material reasons can be out of our reach. In order to learn the ethical lessons these events can carry, we need to do the full movement of recognition on our part, regardless of whether the other person is in a position to complete it in each particular case. We need to be open to the other as someone capable of responding, as a human being, not an object of study or entertainment.

As I explained in chapter 1, disgrace is an objective state, a social condition one may find oneself in irrespective of one's emotional engagement with that situation. Etymologically, 'disgrace' is a word with a religious content; it refers to a fall from the state of divine grace, the state of those upon whom God looks kindly or favorably. And one who has offended God is typically not very well regarded by the community. Disgrace, therefore, is a social verdict of rejection that implies that one's actions or traits are shameful and one ought to feel ashamed of them. Coetzee's novel begins by showing us right away the main character's disgraceful traits and actions, his "fall from grace" and the terrible and tragic journey he has to undergo afterwards (as if, indeed, a god had forsaken him and abandoned him to a terrible fate). The role of self-conscious emotions, and particularly shame and humiliation, is essential in the main character's journey.

The question that arises here, however, is a crucial interpretative one: is this a journey of self-disintegration or of self-discovery? The structure of *Disgrace* can be interpreted as exactly the polar opposite of a *Bildungsroman*: if that kind of novel told the story of the construction of a singular subject, of how he (it was generally a "he," at least originally in the 19th C) made himself into the man he came to be, *Disgrace* would be the story of the self-destruction and disintegration of one such subject.[74] Indeed, it can be read as an illustration of all the flaws and blind spots that make the paradigmatic 19th Century subject unviable and doomed to perish. I believe, and in my reading it will be obvious, that this is clearly the case, but this does not preclude self-discovery. On the contrary, self-disintegration, on the one hand, and self-discovery and ethical learning, on the other, go hand in hand in this novel (and very often in life too, when we are engaged in self-deceit, for example). I argue that what I call Lurie's "colonial masculinity" crumbles under the pressure of the events and his emotional responses to them, and gives rise to a different, more ethically productive, kind of selfhood. By examining his evolution from narcissism to a proper openness to the suffering of others, I conclude that shame, as the experience of "being riveted to oneself," in Lévinas' (2003, 63) suggestive phrase, plays an important ethical role; but one that is far more disruptive and uncertain than Aristotelian-inspired defenses of shame as an essential moral emotion maintain. Against accounts that cast shame as either destructive or constructive, Coetzee shows us that neither possibility exists without the other.

[74] Thanks to Carlos Thiebaut for pointing out this inverse parallel.

RESISTANCE TO DISGRACE OR UNACKNOWLEDGED SHAME?

Let us now look at the novel more closely. Through my reading, I will make use repeatedly of the distinctions between shame, humiliation and disgrace that I established in chapter 1, as well as of the Sartrean conceptual framework I set up in the previous chapter. *Disgrace* reads in many ways as an exploration of those distinctions and the (sometimes blurry) boundaries between them, with a special focus on the conditions under which disgrace (as an objective state) and humiliation (as the result of a perceived offense coming from another) give rise to shame or to some other complex responses. That entails of course not merely an exploration of the processes involved, but also an investigation and reflection on their meaning. The novel tells us the story of David Lurie's disgrace, of how he suffers and deals with it, and how he perhaps— if we agree with Derek Attridge (2000)— ends up painfully arriving at some sort of state of "grace." To briefly summarize the plot: Lurie, the protagonist, is a white 52-year-old university professor in Cape Town, South Africa, in the post-apartheid period. After an unfortunate affair with a colored student that costs him his job, he takes refuge at his daughter Lucy's farm in the Eastern Cape, where both are victims of a violent burglary in the course of which he is half burned and she is gang-raped. These traumatic experiences trigger the collapse of Lurie's "colonial masculinity," as I said before, but they are also the start of an ambiguous process of self-discovery. To put it in Sartrean terms, these experiences systematically demolish layers of bad faith to arrive at something one could call authenticity. But as we will see, authenticity for Coetzee is nothing like an elevated state, it has very little to do with triumph, salvation or realization; "grace" is not a blessed state, at least not for Lurie. But we will come to this. Let us look at the process step by step.

How does Lurie first react to his disgrace? In the hearing for the sexual harassment complaint brought against him by his student, Melanie Isaacs, he pleads guilty as charged, but he refuses to show contrition and repentance (Coetzee 1999, 51–58). This is a legal plea, a "secular plea," in his own words, which means he admits his guilt as a fact, the fact that he has broken a public norm, but entails nothing in the fashion of a moral self-assessment and deliberately hides his emotions. Before the committee, then, Lurie accepts the external, objective consequences of his actions (legal guilt and social disgrace), but he rejects all attempts to force him to endorse the moral judgment behind them and to publicly display his emotions, taking these as obscene assaults on his privacy. Adriaan van Heerden (2010, 47) gives his account of this based on an Aristotelian distinction between (the subjective feeling of) shame and (the objective social state of) disgrace roughly along the lines discussed in chapter 1. After spelling out this distinction he moves on to a very particular interpretation of the novel:

> What Aristotle does not appear to allow for … is the possibility that society might be in the wrong by imposing disgrace, that the values or ideals on the base of which that disgrace is sanctioned may be morally suspect, and that the individual who resists shame in such cases may be justified in doing so. It is this possibility that Coetzee opens up for us in interesting ways. In *Disgrace* the main character (David Lurie) does not feel ashamed about desiring and seducing one of his young students … even though, when a complaint is upheld against him and he loses his job, he is—from society's perspective—in disgrace.

In chapter 1 I already discussed and accepted the distinction between disgrace and the feeling of shame roughly along these lines, and I agree that it is possible to resist shame in this way. But this reading of Lurie's attitude is not very illuminating: it presents him as a moral pioneer (see Calhoun 2004, 129–32), as if he was opening up new moral ground or upholding better values on the face of oppression or narrow-mindedness. But this is wrong. The novel certainly does criticize the committee on many levels, but this does not mean it is endorsing Lurie's position. Indeed, I believe it criticizes it. And it is wrong to think that Lurie does not feel shame about what he has done. Admittedly, he refuses to show contrition, we are never told in so many words that he feels guilty or ashamed, and he certainly thinks that the committee has no right to intrude into his private life and ask him to expose his emotions; but none of this unequivocally tells us that he does not feel shame. Sympathizing with Lurie's exasperation at bigotry and political correctness, and sharing his suspicions regarding an atonement and forgiveness obtained at the price of putting on a show of repentance, should not lead us to see him, as van Heerden does, in a heroic light, as someone who simply rebels against hypocritical social conventions, like Diogenes of Synope masturbating unashamedly in the middle of Athens' agora.[75]

The problem with the bigots in the committee, what Coetzee questions and criticizes about them, is not their moral condemnation of Lurie's actions: their moral condemnation is correct; his behavior to Melanie was abusive and wrong, and Coetzee shows this clearly. The problem here is the implication that a public display of repentance can mitigate the offense. Many (including van Heerden 2010, 49; Saunders 2005) have read this scene as a harsh criticism of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) that was functioning in South Africa at the time of the novel's publication, motivated by a very deep skepticism of the role that any institution can play in the processes of forgiveness and reconciliation.[76] This is not the place to develop this line of thought, which would take me far too far from my purposes, but this general approach to the TRC supports my view that what is going on here

[75] For an insightful account of Diogenes' shamelessness, see Hutchinson (2011, 105–107).
[76] For an analysis and a reflection on the TRC that goes deep in this direction, see Thomas Brudholm (2008).

is *not* a questioning of the criteria for social disgrace, but rather a reflection on the conditions under which forgiveness and reconciliation can take place after a very real and disgraceful moral offense. Indeed, as I will briefly show later on—because again, a detailed treatment would not fit into my current study—the novel contains a very nuanced, very skeptical and therefore, in this sense, very disheartened reflection on the possibility of genuine forgiveness, even when the offender (Lurie) faces the victim and asks for pardon in an intimate context. Therefore, the connection between disgrace, moral blame and the feelings of shame and guilt cannot be understood here by equating Lurie's attitude before the committee to that of a moral pioneer (Calhoun 2004, 129–32).

Moreover, as I said above, I think van Heerden is wrong in one further respect, namely when he says that Lurie does not feel shame and does not accept that his behavior to Melanie deserves condemnation. In the novel, Lurie does declare this several times, but those statements are nuanced by other claims, actions and thoughts of his. Establishing exactly what Lurie feels is not a straightforward matter, because Coetzee rarely gives detailed phenomenological or psychological descriptions of his characters' feelings, he gestures and suggests, he leaves opacities everywhere, deliberately opening spaces for reflection and interpretation. So the absence of an explicit description of Lurie's shame and humiliation does not entail that he doesn't feel them, that Coetzee doesn't represent him as feeling them. There are two important sources of opacity that I would like to highlight here. First, the story is narrated from a partial point of view: in third person singular, indeed, but never through an omniscient narrator. The storytelling voice does *not* know everything about all the characters, cannot report on all their thoughts and feelings, but instead focuses on one of them, offering a partial view even of this one. With varying degrees of distance, we see it all through Lurie's perspective. The narrator makes frequent use of 'free indirect style' and never changes focus to a different character.[77] And David Lurie, we are told, has always been "a great deceiver and a great self-deceiver" (Coetzee 1999, 188). This self-deceit is a key feature of his approach to the world at the outset, and it can deceive the reader too, although Coetzee gives us the means to see beyond Lurie's limitations.[78] Secondly, towards the end, when Lurie does not appear to be deceiving himself any longer.[79] Something is clearly happening in him and to him, but he cannot name it. And in my view, this inability

[77] Free indirect style is a way of presenting a character's word or thoughts where the narrator does not reproduce them literally in quotation marks, as in direct style (Mary said, "I am so tired!"), nor introduces them with clear markers of reported speech, such as "said that, "thought that" and so on (Mary said that she was very tired). The narrator simply transfers the character's words or thought to the third person (She was so tired!), thereby achieving a subtle interplay of perspectives between narrator and character. For a careful discussion of this interplay see Goldie (2012, 32–39).

[78] For a brilliant discussion of this point, see Crary (2010).

[79] At least not so blatantly: we are human (limited, insufficient), after all, and Coetzee is subtle enough to show that lucidity is precarious, and self-deceit is always a looming possibility.

to give a clear, closing interpretation of his experience is a fundamental part of David's ethical learning. So perhaps, if there is shame, it must remain unnamed from his point of view. And thus, the question is: does he or does he not feel shame, or guilt? If so, how do they work and what do they mean? What kinds of shame are they? Do they contribute to any ethical learning he might be doing? How does the experience of shame change in line with his attitude to the world and others?

COLONIAL MASCULINITY AND ITS BREAKDOWN

One of the keys of the whole process is Lurie's self-deception, which could also (though not necessarily) be described in terms of Sartrean bad faith: his attachment to identity labels, his denial of responsibility, his externalization of blame. His problem at the beginning of the novel is similar to King Lear's: he finds it increasingly difficult to sustain the identity he aspires to and he goes to tremendous lengths to avoid the shame that this causes him. Let us look at the self-identity that Lurie has built for himself at the beginning of the novel. He starts off as someone in a traditionally powerful position, someone who possesses all the traits that the Foucaultian and feminist critiques have identified with the purportedly universal subject of Modernity and Enlightenment. According to those critiques, all appeals to a universal human nature, to a rational, self-sufficient, autonomous subject, made throughout Modernity since Descartes, hide the values and traits of a specific and situated individual: a white bourgeois man, a man of European origin, who has received an education and owns property, and who is or will become the head of a family, and therefore is heterosexual. With very minor adaptations to the South African context of the 1990s, this is exactly what David Lurie takes himself to be. He has always seen himself as an intellectual, a professor with a good social standing, a sexually attractive man: pretty much like his heroes, Lord Byron and the English Romantic poets. But Lurie does not live in 19th C London, he lives in Cape Town in the 1990s, and this paradigmatically colonial self-image is very fragile. From the beginning, the novel is full of signs of its weakness, and both David and the reader become witnesses to the questioning and decline of this sort of masculinity on all fronts: sex appeal, physical strength, power and dominance, intellectual superiority, his role as a father, guide and protector, and so on.

The "subject of Modernity" seeks to become independent, self-sufficient and autonomous, but in the process he isolates himself from the world and others, coming extremely close and often falling into solipsism. And so we see that Lurie's relations to the world in general and to women in particular are objectifying, narcissistic and self-absorbed: he uses them for his own pleasure, but seldom listens to their voices. In this sense, it is no coincidence that all the women he chooses as sexual partners are

much younger than him and colored: the epitome of the oppressed in a colonial context. Furthermore, Lurie often behaves like a stalker, he does not even seem to realize that his sexual partners are people, with a dignity and a privacy that should deserve some respect: he intrudes into the private life of the prostitute he frequents by secretly following her, and later by hiring a detective to find out her home address and phone number (all the while telling himself that he needs to find out more about her life because there is something special between them, something more than a prostitute-client relationship). He obtains Melanie Isaacs' personal details from the University records instead of asking her. He calls her, comes to her house uninvited and forces himself on her, when she clearly wants him to leave, describing their sexual encounter as "not rape, not quite that, but undesired nevertheless, undesired to the core" (Coetzee 1999, 25). It is true that he subsequently feels a fleeting disgust at himself, but this does not (yet) make him change his mindset.

In sharp contrast to this objectifying, preying attitude towards colored women, when it comes to defending his own dignity, privacy and rights ('the rights of desire,' Coetzee 1999, 89), he is incredibly articulate and forceful. In my view, he refuses to perform the public "breast-beating" that the committee demands as a point of personal pride, or arrogance in Sartre's terms (Sartre 1969, 290, see my discussion in chapter 3). His attitude is exceedingly arrogant and he tries to act as someone who is being publicly humiliated in an undeserved way, by showing a haughty indignation and refusing to accept the underlying moral condemnation: he will state the facts and plead guilty in a legal sense, guilty of having broken a norm, but he refuses to pass moral judgment on himself and expose any feelings he may have on the matter, as he considers them part of his private life. Again, here there is indeed a criticism of the committee's inquisitorial attitude, but we should not read it in a heroic light. David Lurie is no hero, under any circumstances, no matter how hard he tries to present himself as one; and he is not (or at least not only, nor mainly) acting on principle. As I mentioned on chapter 1 discussing Tangney and Dearing (2004), psychologists noticed long ago what they call the "shame-anger connection:" a defensive, often violent, reaction of indignation against the person who uncovers your shame.[80] This can be seen at play here: Lurie's attitude has a powerful element of defensiveness—he is trying to deflect his own shame by attacking the shamer—and it has to be understood in the context of his self-image, a self-image that is subject to intense pressure and starting to crack.

From the very first pages of the novel, we see David resenting the shadows that time is starting to cast over his narcissistic image of himself as a successful and powerful man: what he calls "the great

[80] For more on this, see, e. g. Tangney (2005). Martha Nussbaum (2006, chap. 4) also offers a helpful discussion of this and other issues. Her analysis of primitive shame connected to narcissism is particularly relevant here.

rationalization" (Coetzee 1999, 3) has downgraded his status at the University and has relegated his field of expertise—Romantic poetry—to a mere decorative course that he is *allowed* to teach "like all rationalized personnel," "because that is good for morale" (Coetzee 1999, 3). Moreover, he is aware of being a mediocre teacher, with no vocation or passion for the job, and at best a modest scholar. So, in his new environment, the new post-colonial, post-apartheid South Africa, his social position as an intellectual in the purest old style of the Western colonizers is radically thrown into question. Later on, we will learn that his role as a father is another source of insecurity. In a sense he is proud of his daughter Lucy's independence (Coetzee 1999, 61), but this very independence and her rural lifestyle and friends, so different from his own, together, perhaps, with the fact that she is a lesbian,[81] make him wonder how good a guide and introducer to life he has been for her, how much he has actually taught her (Coetzee 1999, 76, 79).

But more important, and entangled with all this, is the issue of aging in connection to sexual desire and sex appeal, an issue that is crucial to interpret Lurie's reaction before the committee. From the start there are clear signs that he is afraid and ashamed of growing old and becoming unattractive, unable to seduce women. In many ways, he is and sees himself as a declining Casanova, which troubles him deeply. His relationships with women are permeated by that fear and that shame. He imagines the conversations of young prostitutes shuddering with disgust at the spectacle of old clients like himself (Coetzee 1999, 8). He imagines Melanie taking a bath to cleanse herself of her contact with him after he has "not quite" raped her and, more importantly, he also appears to feel revolted at what he has just done when he wishes to "slide into a bath of his own" (Coetzee 1999, 25). These thoughts are unequivocal signs of shame, as are also the desperate idealizations he comes up with in order to repair his self-image and keep these shaming ideas at bay, like pretending that the prostitute he frequents actually likes him and sees him as more than a mere customer, or pretending he is some kind of Byronic figure, endowed with a poetic sensibility that allows him to understand Melanie's beauty and what he thinks of as the beauty of their relationship on a level that she cannot access. These are all subterfuges to block from view what these women actually think and feel about him. It is hard to imagine a clearer case of self-deception: he desperately clings to his false self-image of Byronic masculinity; he produces fantastic self-narrations to sustain it and, like Lear, he avoids recognizing others out of fear of what will be revealed to them and to himself in the process.

It is in this context that I propose to read Lurie's reactions at the committee hearing, as a clear example of those processes at play. His ridiculous attempt to excuse himself by saying "I became a servant of

[81] Indeed, Lucy is the polar opposite of her father in almost every aspect, from the most superficial to the deepest ones, including self-understanding and moral integrity.

Eros" (Coetzee 1999, 52) is symptomatic. It tries to isolate desire from judgment, evade responsibility by claiming he was in the grip of an insurmountable force (a god!)[82], and establish his intellectual superiority through a scholarly reference that places him, in his own eyes, in kinship with his heroes, Lord Byron and the English Romantic poets. Through arrogance, he tries to build a barrier between himself and the committee, to place himself above them, so that their eyes and opinions won't have the power to shame him. During the whole hearing he is desperately trying to hide from everybody, especially from himself, the real problem: that he has acted like a predator because he is terrified of having to acknowledge his decline, because he needs to reaffirm himself. He clings to his self-image as a Byronic seducer, in a desperate attempt to escape being fixated as a harasser. Near the end of the novel, in a conversation with his ex-wife Rosalind, he declares that, in the hearing, he had rejected the committee's demands to issue an apology and repent publicly in order to defend his freedom of speech, his right to be silent. She replies skeptically: "That sounds very grand. But you were always a great self-deceiver, David. A great deceiver and a great self-deceiver. *Are you sure it wasn't just a case of being caught with your pants down?*" (Coetzee 1999, 188, emphasis added).

In my view, Rosalind is exactly right: it *was* a case of being caught with his pants down, of being revealed as a man who stalks women in order to get what he wants from them. The reasons why he acts in this way are precisely shame—the feeling of exposure to an external perspective that severely questions his ego ideal—and his desperate endeavor to avoid it through self-reaffirmation, through arrogance. The assessment involved here is obviously not moral: it's just shame of his crumbling charm, of not being a Byron, of no longer being able to deceive himself convincingly into believing he is a Byron. It is the primitive, narcissistic kind of shame Nussbaum (2006, chap. 4) describes: a self-assessment that does not incorporate a proper sensibility towards others, that only takes them into account as sources of pleasure or pain for oneself. It illustrates perfectly the structure that Webber (2011) described. Here, therefore, we are still deep within a self-deceiving process that can be described in terms of bad faith. And moreover, we have an illustration of the processes that lead Tangney (2005), for example, to her exceedingly negative conclusions on the counterproductive role of shame in ethics. Lurie's desperate endeavors to avoid being shamed lead him to a selfish behavior where he abuses others, completely disregards their dignity and feelings, tells lies and commits irregularities at work to hide his abuses, and reacts defensively when he is discovered, in a way that is ultimately damaging for him as well, as it annihilates any remote possibility he might have had of

[82] He even does this later on, talking to his daughter Lucy: "'My case rests on the rights of desire,' he says. 'On the god who makes even the small birds quiver.' … *I was a servant of Eros*: that is what he wants to say, but does he have the effrontery? *It was a god who acted through me*. What vanity! Yet not a lie, not entirely" (Coetzee 1999, 89). Notice Lurie's ambivalent judgment of his own justification.

retaining his job. This kind of shame has indeed all the antisocial and even immoral consequences Tangney and Dearing (2004) describe and deplore, and if shame and its consequences were limited to what we have seen up to now in the novel, one could not fail but agree with them. But even this type of shame has one important virtue, which Tangney herself admits to in her study of incarcerated inmates (Tangney and Stuewig 2004).[83] Namely, it forces Lurie time and again to confront himself, it prevents him from getting too self-indulgent in his justificatory narratives, which have to get wilder and wilder but also harder to be confirmed by others and therefore more fragile, making it clear that such a strategy won't work in the long run. But at this point, the instability is huge and, with no further elements, it can be hard to see how shame can help break the cycle of narcissism and antisocial behavior, instead of fuelling it. To see how a break from the cycle could happen, let me proceed with my reading.[84]

SURVIVOR SHAME?

What is the next stage of Lurie's learning process, and what kind of shame does he feel through it? The man who takes refuge at his daughter's farm in the Eastern Cape is still someone who tries to cling to his Byronic image, who tells justificatory stories to his skeptical daughter and tries to turn his misfortune into the high art of opera, an opera about his hero Lord Byron.[85] Despite his insecurities and social disgrace, then, David's crumbling colonial masculinity is not really shattered to pieces until the burglary on his daughter Lucy's farm, when he is badly burned and she is gang raped by three black men. After that traumatic shock a remarkable change takes place, which can be summarized in one word: openness (or at least, the beginning of it). In his damaged, vulnerable state, his first spontaneous response is an entirely new sensitivity to the suffering of others—first and foremost Lucy, then the animals that surround them (especially the dogs at Bev Shaw's clinic)—and a keen appreciation of the generosity of their neighbors, the Shaws. He is greatly comforted by Bev's skill and gentleness in changing his bandages (Coetzee 1999, 106–7), and marvels at her husband, who spontaneously assumes that Lurie would also help them if they, the Shaws, were in distress (Coetzee 1999, 102). There is an element of shame (moral shame this time) when Lurie skeptically asks himself

[83] See my comments on this in chapter 2.
[84] Let me make one thing clear from the start: I do not believe that one necessarily has to undergo what Lurie undergoes in order for constructive varieties of shame to be possible. I believe there are less dramatic ways out of narcissism and not everyone will need such a harsh cure. But this is not possible for Lurie in the novel. Here Cavell's remarks on contingency and necessity in tragedy apply (Cavell 1995, 341; see my comments on this in chapter 3).
[85] See n. 82 above.

if this is true: a vague suspicion that he is the kind of person who would have remained selfishly unmoved by his neighbors' suffering. This is the first time in the novel that Lurie feels shame at being selfish and makes no attempt at masking it with justificatory self-deception.

For reasons that in a sense are similar to Agamben's (1999), as discussed in chapter 3, Coetzee is interested in exploring the possibility of a resistant ethical core that would be entirely bodily and non-linguistic. But in Coetzee's hands, the body is intersubjective, not just the site of disclosure of being-towards-death. The body teaches about interdependence, not just about mortality.[86] Indeed, in *Disgrace*, David Lurie's sophisticated language and advanced linguistic knowledge (his obsession with etymologies, for example) often seem to stand in the way of his honest relations to others and to himself, as smokescreens that mask and manipulate. But linguistic and cultural screens cannot be deployed with animals, or at least not in the same sense as with other humans. And this is why the clearest evidence that Lurie is changing his attitude and undergoing an ethical learning can be found in his relationships with animals, notably with the dogs that Lucy and Bev take care of. Coetzee is much more subtle and sophisticated than I've just put it, though: the solution in the end is not to give up language and culture, as if one could really know what that would mean. Language and culture do give us something valuable beyond measure and make us human, but this something and the meaning of humanity is not what many believe, what Lurie believes at the start of the novel. The problem is thinking that they elevate us to a region that is separate from, superior to and purer than the body.

After the attack on Lucy's farm, David can no longer hide from the evidence of the ruin and collapse of his colonial self-image, from the evidence of how groundless and pointless it is. The transformation in his masculinity is reflected in his affair with Bev, an affair that answers much more to her desires than to his: the "servant of Eros" becomes in a sense a servant of Bev's. But the awareness of his utter failure as a manly Byronic figure is expressed with particular poignancy in one conversation with Lucy about the attack, where she tells him that he does not understand what happened to her:

> 'On the contrary, I understand all too well,' he says. 'I will pronounce the word we have avoided hitherto. You were raped. Multiply. By three men.'
> 'And?'
> 'You were in fear of your life. You were afraid that after you had been used you would be killed. Disposed of. Because you were nothing to them.'
> 'And?' Her voice is now a whisper.

[86] See Antonio Gómez Ramos (2005) for a discussion of the ethical and existential dimensions of the body in a different novel by Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, which in any case is very closely related to *Disgrace* in its core themes.

> 'And I did nothing. I did not save you.'
>
> That is his own confession … (Coetzee 1999, 157)

That is his confession indeed: the first naked, truthful admission of his powerlessness and fragility. Is there shame here? The word 'confession' seems to point towards a feeling of guilt, but shame and guilt are closely entangled, particularly in traumatic contexts like this one. Sartre, for example, claims that "my shame is a confession" (Sartre 1969, 261), an admission that I am what the other sees, that she, not I, is in control of an aspect of myself. Has David failed to do his duty and broken a moral norm? Or is it rather his identity as a protecting father which is at stake? Where does guilt end and shame begin? Since the role implies duties, both emotions can be better understood in connection with each other. We are told that since the attack, David has nightmares where Lucy cries out to him for help. And here it becomes unambiguously clear that he is tormented by the thought of having failed his daughter (of having failed in his role as a protecting father). Here, however, in this intimate context, as opposed to the University hearing, he faces his failure and admits it openly, with no excuses or attempts to hide. Lucy's reply at the same time exonerates him from guilt and confirms his powerlessness: he *could not* have been expected to rescue her; there was nothing he *could* have done about it. David knows. But the striking thing is that his formulation is not that he *was not able* to save her, but that he *did not* do it. Is he implying that he *ought to have been able* to? And further, this "ought," would it apply to him as her protecting father or to him as her fellow human being?

One dimension of what is happening here can certainly be understood as the collapse of the stereotype of the protecting, powerful father. Another possibility would be to read this in the context of violence and trauma, as survivor shame or guilt, as emotions that bear witness to human vulnerability and fragility. Is he feeling guilty and ashamed because his daughter had a worse fate? Is this something akin to what Primo Levi describes as the shame of being alive in the place of another (Levi 1989, 81)? There is certainly an element of this, of the moral emotions of a powerless victim, which, in the midst of her radical humiliation, manifest her humanity and connectedness to a moral world (see Guenther 2012). But Lurie is not a Holocaust survivor, his experience is very different from Levi's, and his efforts to elaborate it lead him through a very different path.[87] Perhaps the fundamental dissimilarity is that the violence was not (and is not perceived as) arbitrary or indiscriminate in the same way, and it was not in two respects, as we will see. As a result of this, the inchoate discovery David will make is not only that of his powerlessness to prevent harm, but also that of his ability (the human ability) to inflict

[87] Of course, this is a fictional story. The writer here is not a victim of extreme abuse trying to elaborate and communicate his experience, but a man linked by many identity traits with the oppressing side of a brutal regime trying to elaborate an adequate individual call to collective responsibility for the atrocities perpetrated during apartheid.

it unconsciously. And this lack of awareness of the harm we cause can come from limitations of our senses or our understanding, from no fault of our own, but very often it also comes from a willingly self-inflicted blindness, from avoidance of an ugly truth, from shunning our responsibilities, and so on.

So what are the differences between Levi's survivor experience and David Lurie's? Why don't the Luries perceive the violence as arbitrary in the same way? In the first place, the Luries are a white middle-class family in post-apartheid South Africa; they were on the privileged side of a brutally racist colonial regime: there are historical and political reasons for black people to want to take revenge on people like them, as both David and Lucy explicitly recognize (Coetzee 1999, 112, 133, 156, 158–60). As far as we know (and nothing in the novel suggests otherwise), neither David nor Lucy have been directly nor actively involved in the crimes of apartheid. However, his predatory attitudes towards women, especially "exotic" ones (Coetzee 1999, 8), and the smug sense of superiority he constantly exhibits, stress his complicity with the colonial regime and its underlying worldview. His way of being in the world and dealing with other people places him in an ambiguous position of connivance with the white oppressors. This is the blurry moral territory of individual complicity with colonial or national wrongs that is a favorite ground for Coetzee's literary exploration. David often tries to shove off this sense of historical responsibility, but Lucy openly expresses it (Coetzee 1999, 158), and her words and attitudes suggest the idea that if people like them want to keep living as farmers in South Africa and be a part of the community, instead of isolated in a fort full of guns and surrounded by barbed wire, like her neighbor Ettinger, they have to be ready to accept the consequences of their place in history. Whether this is actually Coetzee's position is open to discussion, but it is clearly Lucy's.

Secondly, there is another sense in which the attack was not indiscriminate. The kinds of violence suffered by David and Lucy are also different in non-arbitrary ways. Their places are not interchangeable, it could never have been him instead of Lucy, and the crime is gender-specific. David realizes this acutely, he realizes (he is often told) that he was not there with her, that he does not know what happened. He is finally trying to listen, opening up to her suffering, he wants to protect and help her heal, and to do that he needs to understand. This is the source of a major moral problem for David, who starts to take seriously the possibility that his view of the world is too narrow, and therefore perhaps often mistaken or inadequate. He tries to see, to imagine what his daughter underwent, and discovers that, ultimately, he can easily identify with the rapists, "inhabit them, fill them with the ghost of himself. *The question is, does he have it in him to be the woman?*" (Coetzee 1999, 160, emphasis added).

Does he indeed? Here Lurie comes face to face with the limits of his empathy and imagination, and realizes that his sensibilities have always been closed to the other's feelings, that he can't quite stand where the woman victim stands, not even in his imagination. All this might be just a fiction, of course. It might be a result of post-traumatic guilt and shame, of the mechanism of identification with one's abusers that has been postulated and studied by psychoanalysts (for more on this see Leys 2009, chap. 2; Nussbaum 2006, chap. 4). But be this as it may, the point is that this experience and its elaboration open up a whole new moral landscape for Lurie. As Nancy Sherman (2010) has argued, these post-traumatic emotions and the evaluations they imply are not "irrational:" they do have ethical significance and point to the value of human relationships. Through them, Lurie becomes aware of the alterity of the other and starts worrying about it. More than that, he starts worrying about the way he himself affects others, the role he can play in bringing about their suffering or their relief.

ACQUIRING AWARENESS OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR HARM: MORAL SHAME AND CARING

Thus, for the first time in the novel, Lurie addresses—admittedly, in an incomplete and unsatisfactory way—gender and race divides and thinks about his place in the power relations at play in them. Attridge (2000, 104), among others, says that Lurie is oblivious of any parallel between his daughter's rape and Melanie's "not quite" rape by him, and it is true that he doesn't openly compare them (the degree of violence is of course not comparable). But narratively Coetzee clearly connects them, and there are signs that the connection is also playing some inchoate role in David's mind. The ease with which he can stand in the rapists' shoes, the way he finds himself coming to visit Melanie's father, not knowing very well what to do or say, are indications of this, indications that he sees himself as the cause of a sort of harm he never thought about or tried to understand before. At one point, in an attempt to convince Lucy to report the rape (she had only reported the burglary), unable to interpret her exasperated silence, he says:

> 'Can I guess?' he says. 'Are you trying to remind me of something?'
> 'Am I trying to remind you of what?'
> 'Of *what women undergo at the hands of men*' (Coetzee 1999, 111, emphasis added).

These words contain no explicit comparison to Melanie, but they may indicate he is not completely oblivious of the parallel. Admittedly, they do not mean that he takes, or that we as readers should take, what he did to Melanie and what the rapists did to Lucy on a perfectly equal footing. The differences are obvious and require no underlining. Melanie could accuse David of using his power to pressure her,

of forcing her, of being insensitive, but not of hating her, of deliberately intending to hurt her as much as possible, which is one of the things that Lucy found most devastating about being raped (Coetzee 1999, 156).[88] And obviously, being able to imagine oneself committing a crime does not make one objectively guilty of that crime. But realizing that he is able to identify with the rapists and not with the victim has a strong effect on David. And he only comes to understand his own responsibility for the harm suffered by others when he finds himself in the place of the victim, but in the ambiguous manner of, in a sense, being and not being the victim at the same time. More precisely: when he starts seriously trying to think himself in that place. So, in my reading, Lurie would go from a traumatic acknowledgment of his own vulnerability, through survivor shame and guilt and a newfound sensitivity towards others, to an inchoate understanding of himself as someone responsible for harm; and the shame that comes with it. Survivor shame makes him sensitive to his own vulnerability and that of others, to the human vulnerability that comes from interdependence. This paves the way for the moral shame of a perpetrator, for the shame connected with understanding himself as a rapist and an abuser. This clearly verges on the territory of guilt, but when the problem is one's whole approach to the world and others, how can the line between self and behavior be clearly drawn?

Having assumed these things, then, what can one do? All the consolation one seems to be able to offer is being open and exposed, like the stray dogs David helps Bev take care of: placing oneself naked before the other, acknowledging her suffering, respecting her. One of the things David tries to do is give the dead dogs a dignified incineration, so that they are not treated as trash, but as suffering beings that deserve some respect until the end (Coetzee 1999, 146; see also Gaita 2011). But in this position there is again the shame of powerlessness and passivity, tempting him into self-deception. This is the mixture we find in the scene where Lurie pays an unexpected visit to Melanie Isaacs' family (Coetzee 1999, chap. 19). At the end of the dinner that they offer him in a spirit of Christian mercy,[89] David tells Melanie's father that he is sorry for the way things turned out and asks for his pardon. And then he kneels in front of the women who look like Melanie: the mother, and the younger sister who elicits in him the same kind of riotous desire. He humiliates himself in front of those he used to objectify (and he still objectifies, as his thoughts on Melanie's sister reveal). These are the gestures and words of guilt

[88] As a colonizer, Lurie simply takes what he wants, objectifying the other and ignoring her feelings, because he convinces himself that, being the only subject before an object, he has the right to do it. The counter-attack by the oppressed is charged with hatred, with the desire to annihilate the other, offending, subject. One cannot take revenge on inanimate things (unless one personifies them).

[89] There are several elements here, including the religious one, that suggest a sustained critical reflection on the role of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. There is no denying the obvious scepticism about the possibility of racial reconciliation in the South-African context.

and shame, of someone who confesses and regrets the harm he has caused. But these expressive gestures do not translate into an understanding between them.

In front of the Isaacs family, David depicts his affair with Melanie without showing any sign of acknowledgement of the power relations he misused in his favor, and he attributes the problems to some clumsiness on his end ('I lack the lyrical,' Coetzee 1999, 171). And Isaacs, who clearly enjoys having David at his mercy to humiliate him, and at the same time relishes in his own show of Christian generosity towards his enemies, ends up thinking that David's apology was instrumentally directed at regaining his position at the University. So there is no reconciliation, no redemption, and no forgiveness of sins. Not even a possibility to share each other's suffering, because David, although he does tell them that he is sunk in a state of disgrace and is being punished (Coetzee 1999, 172), does not reveal the extent of his misery, he does not say that he is also the father of a raped daughter. This is, in many ways, a noble silence: he does not come to seek commiseration, to obtain their forgiveness through their pity by showing that his suffering is much worse than theirs; he does not usurp the victim's place, which shows respect and openness to their suffering. It underlines his refusal to enter into a mercantilist dynamics of forgiveness; a refusal that shows skepticism about the possibility of reconciliation, and at the same time is profoundly ethical. But the whole scene is deeply ambivalent, with him showing respect and going through the motions of shame and guilt (which to a large extent he genuinely feels at this point) and asking for pardon, while simultaneously trying to save some face, admitting only to mistakes in the details and showing hints of the old Lurie in his secret desire for Melanie's sister. There is still some pride, some clinging to his self-deceiving fantasies, some limits and imperfections in his openness to others.

After this, in Cape Town—where he finds his house broken into and ransacked—he tries to see Melanie. And, again, we are never told what he intends to say to her, but her boyfriend violently sends him away.[90] Thoroughly humiliated and defeated, on his way back home he hires in the street a very young black prostitute, a girl that is probably no more than fourteen, who performs oral sex on him in his car. Then he feels relaxed again, but the thought that ends this utterly disturbing episode is revelatory: "So this is all it takes!, he thinks. How could I ever have forgotten it?" (Coetzee 1999, 194). How could he have forgotten that in order to regain his pride after being humiliated, all he has to do is enact a situation where he is the master again, such as sexually abusing a young black woman. There is a feeling of deep shame running through this passage, and particularly in this sentence. Once again, it is connected to his sexual relationships with women, but it has a very different form compared to the

[90] The fact that David fails in all his attempts to confront Melanie after her official complaint is, of course, relevant for Coetzee's position on forgiveness and reconciliation in South Africa.

one we saw at the beginning of the novel. The trigger is again shame of his failing masculinity: of not being able to stand up to Melanie's cocky boyfriend. But the passage ends with the deeper shame that "this is all it takes." "This:" reverting to his position of dominance, choosing someone even more fragile and oppressed than himself, someone whose characteristics (female, young, black) put him again in the position of the powerful colonizer. He is back to where he began, riveted to himself.

Or is he? Is it rather that he is too old to learn, as he insists again and again throughout the novel? Could we imagine Lurie taking this attitude towards his seduction of Melanie at the outset? By no means. Of course, he did feel deeply ashamed and disgusted with himself after assaulting her at her house. What has now changed, however, is that the excuses and self-justifying stories are now entirely unavailable to him. There is much more self-awareness here, a much more lucid perception of what is happening and what he is doing. In a sense, he is back to his old vices (he never entirely abandoned all he used to be), but he sees them in a completely different light, as desperate maneuvers to maintain a mask of self-deceit that has completely collapsed under pressure. Time and suffering have turned David's shame into a device for lucidity, that, according to Michael Morgan (2008), it can be in the right circumstances. This, now, is moral shame. Not, of course, the humiliation that prompted him to perpetrate the abuse, but the lucidity that follows.

A fraction of colonial masculinity, then, does not collapse until the end, until after this thoroughly humiliating trip to Cape Town and his return to the Eastern Cape, where David learns that he will have to become a grandfather to a child of rape. He ends up living in a pension, writing music that only the sick and stray dogs at Bev Shaw's charity clinic listen to, helping to euthanize them and burning their corpses on the incinerator himself, in order to "safeguard their honour" (Coetzee 1999, 146), giving up his favorite dog, a maimed, suffering dog, to euthanasia. Now finally he does have it in him 'to be the woman.' His music at this point is no longer an opera on Byron, but the desolate lament of Byron's last abandoned lover, growing old alone with her memories. Lurie, in a fall that has deprived him of his former identity traits connected to prestige and power, has attained a new subjectivity that no longer tries to colonize and exert ownership, but accepts his own fragility and indigence, and is open to the other. He has not learned that the committee was in the wrong, he is not questioning the committee's moral verdict, but what he has learned goes far beyond the lesson that the committee wanted to teach him. If David has learned something (and I believe he has), it is not a lesson that any community or society can teach through institutions, and it is not a public lesson, so the idea that the committee's demand for confession and repentance was inappropriate still holds.

Several authors have interpreted what David learns as a newfound sensitivity which is necessary (not sufficient) for moral understanding (Crary 2010), an openness to the suffering of the other (Zembylas 2008), "a dedication to a singularity that exceeds systems and computations: the singularity of every living and dead being, the singularity of the truly inventive work of art" (Attridge 2000, 117). And, as we have remarked, this openness has come hand in hand with a much clearer perception of himself, with a greater degree of self-awareness. It would seem, then, that now all his traditional identity labels have been demolished, now that he accepts his own fragility, his tendency to self-deceit has finally waned and he is much more in touch with himself and, at the same time, much more responsible for and to others. He is much more lucid, much less self-deceiving: he is aware of his own opacity, of that of others, and respectful of alterity. The lesson is private only in the sense that it cannot be verbalized, but it can be acted out: in his behavior to the dogs and their corpses, in his music, in his attitude of standing back and doing his best to respect Lucy's independence. This state of mind is what Derek Attridge (2000) calls "grace," and in Sartrean terms it might be called authentic. However, as I anticipated a few pages ago, and as Attridge points out, there is no redemption here, no purification, no salvation. His dedication to the dogs and to his music is presented as rather hopeless and sterile. This narrative of moral learning does not end in a grand epiphany, but at a dry and naked place, where not much of a future is imaginable, thus underlining its precariousness, its ambiguity, its temporary nature. Authenticity does not empower Lurie: it teaches him caring.

CONCLUSIONS

This process cannot be understood without the role of the moral emotions, notably shame, and the interplay between external judgments and Lurie's self-assessment. Lurie goes from narcissism to a proper sensibility towards others, from "I was a servant of Eros" to "this is all it takes," and as we have seen, his opening up to others goes hand in hand with a diminishing self-deceit, a greater self-awareness, a growing clarity about himself. But this learning is primarily an affective one, not an intellectual one, as his inability to name what is happening to him shows. His trajectory seems to indicate that moral shame is an achievement that goes hand in hand with a proper openness to others. But contrary to what Aristotle thought when he offered his account of shame as the semi-virtue of the learner (*Rhetoric*, bk. 2; see also Burnyeat 1980), the moral shame that Lurie discovers has much more to do with connectedness and recognition in the Cavellian sense (see chapter 3) than with one's understanding of norms or standards. To repeat, according to Gómez Ramos (2005, 25–26), this type of shame does not come from focusing on one's own shortcomings and insufficiencies. It comes from

confronting the suffering and the fragility of the other, which reveal my responsibility and the ambiguity of my position. This, among other things, is what Lurie learns to feel in the end. But a narcissistic kind of shame coexists with it and is very common in our everyday experience: the fact that we learn to look at the world in non-narcissistic ways does not mean that we can leave narcissism behind and make it entirely disappear from our outlook.

Shame is obviously not the only element at play in this process. Without the social disgrace and all the other elements and people around him that place demands on him, Lurie's initial narcissistic shame would not have showed him the way to an ethical kind of shame or to openness to others. That initial narcissistic shame is not ethically constructive, but by pressing him once and again to confront who he is, it has a crucial role in his final lucid self-understanding. Coetzee shows in this novel that ethics has some essential aspects that are private, intimate, and never public. He shows us a society where moral corruption and vilification—at the hands of people that share many traits with Lurie—has gone so deep that conventions pointing to the good seem to have lost all validity through cynicism: a space where something in the way of virtue is impossible, because the public, political (in the Aristotelian sense) side of it cannot be realized. But if the only ethical compass a person has is himself, the result can easily be someone like Lurie at the outset, someone so selfish and self-absorbed that he has lost all sense of responsibility to others and all perspective on himself.[91] The space of intersubjectivity, of a direct relation with a concrete other who is not a thing, but another person or another sentient being, like the dogs in Bev's clinic, is what Lurie needs to learn to navigate in the absence of a reliable conventional social compass. Shame, the feeling of exposure to an external viewpoint, while "being riveted to oneself" (Lévinas 2003, 63), brings home to him time and again the precariousness of his assumptions, his own fragility, his failings, the danger of becoming too convinced and secure of one particular picture of himself. It brings his character into focus and pushes him to realize how much of his problems in his relations to others are actually his responsibility, are stemming from the way he confronts the world and others. Shame on its own does not bring this openness, but as I have shown in this chapter, it can enhance lucidity

[91] As I noted in chapter 2, this point has been eloquently made by Williams (2008, 100) and Calhoun (2004, 134).

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS: SHAME, SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS RELATIONALITY AND CARING

Throughout this dissertation I have strived to elaborate an account that makes sense of the ethical significance of shame while doing justice to its phenomenological and cognitive complexity. My study has moved from an exploration of the varieties and borders of shame (chapter 1), through an overview of several accounts of it as a moral emotion (chapter 2) and some phenomenological analyses of it (chapter 3), to the application and testing of some of the previous insights to the extended literary readings of Shakespeare's *King Lear* (chapter 3) and J. M. Coetzee's *Disgrace* (chapter 4). What has emerged from this variety of sources is a picture of shame as an emotion that taps into our intersubjectivity and reveals us as dependent on others in our very being. My aim in this concluding chapter is to offer an overview of the insights obtained and draw some conclusions from them, to articulate the sense in which shame can be conceived as a form of social self-consciousness and how that contributes to our ethical sensibilities, and finally to suggest some interesting questions for future research.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS CHAPTERS

In chapter 1, I explored the various definitions of shame one can find— the various elements of these definitions, and the main issues of debate. Let me repeat here that there is no consensus on a definition of emotion as a general category, and no agreement on the exact mixture of affective and cognitive elements that constitute an emotion, although it seems clear that some combination must be at play. However, their combination and articulation may vary a great deal among the various phenomena that we call emotions (see Griffiths 1997). My investigation has not dealt at all with the physiology of shame episodes (blushing, activation of various bodily mechanisms, and so on) or the expression of the emotion, and that is partially why Charles Darwin's influential work on emotion has not been mentioned in these pages. I have devoted some attention, though, to the embodied experience of shame, notably in chapter 1. Even if my investigation has not been a phenomenological one throughout the entire dissertation, my lens in phenomenological: I am interested in studying the experience of shame and its meaning. From that point of view, it is particularly difficult (and not very productive) to try to produce a comprehensive definition that can serve to specify all cases of what we call shame, to

discriminate it unequivocally from all other related emotions. Given the historical and cultural variability of emotional experience, it is highly unlikely that the full complexity of human emotion can be accounted for in terms of different discrete "affect programs." It is more plausible to think that emotions have a high degree of cognitive specification and admit of nuances and underdetermination. Therefore, a more productive way of thinking about them would be in terms of family resemblances rather than necessary and sufficient conditions. I did nonetheless describe some central features of shame, some of which are necessary, such as its self-conscious focus. But I did not seek to establish a set of sufficient conditions to define shame and discriminate shame episodes. My research ultimately has been interested in understanding several related questions: (i) Is there a variety of shame that has moral relevance? (ii) If so, where does this relevance come from? Is there something about the emotional territory of shame that makes it particularly important for ethics, particularly apt to inform ethical sensibilities? In referring to shame, therefore, unless I explicitly said otherwise, I have been speaking in as general terms as possible, and did not mean or even hope to cover all possible instances of it.

In chapter 1, then, I started from the standard definition of shame as an emotion of negative self-assessment, linked to the exposure of a failure, inadequacy or shortcoming. Controversies around the definitions and workings of shame have to do either with different views of the type of self or the aspect of it that is at stake in shame, on the one hand, or with the role that other people play in shame (the social dimension), on the other. As far as the self of shame is concerned, I discussed two issues, the possibility of other-directed shame and the meaning of the frequent claim that in shame the "whole self" is involved. First, the conclusion of my section on other-directed shame was that, despite examples that seem to say otherwise, one can defend that shame always focuses on the self ashamed in one way or another. The emotion could also arise by contagion, but as we saw in chapter 1, this type of case does not throw into question the claim that the object of shame is the self ashamed. The cases where the focus seems to be another self require a high degree of self-involvement, so that one feels exposed by proxy: one's self is put on the spot by the actions or characteristics of another person. To put it in the Sartrean terms that I favor later on, there is something about this person or situation that makes me feel that a whole dimension of my selfhood is outside of my control, and given a sufficient degree of identification with this person, shame can happen "by proxy." Seemingly other-directed instances of shame do not throw into question the fact that the object of this emotion is the self ashamed, but they rather make it clear that we cannot understand the selfhood at stake in shame in solipsistic terms. The self of shame depends on others and by virtue of this dependence it can be thrown into question through others.

The second issue I focused on was that of the "whole self." What does it mean to say, as is usual in the literature, that shame focuses on the "whole self" of the person ashamed, as opposed to an aspect of it? The conclusion from this discussion was, roughly, that one should think about the holistic character of shame, in experiential and not evaluative terms. The self of shame, or rather, the aspect of selfhood at stake in shame is not a collection of features, all of which are negatively evaluated. It is an embodied and situated being whose self-individuation in shame depends on many factors. The holistic character of the experience of shame is not due to an all-encompassing negative evaluation of the ashamed self in all its properties. Rather, the opposite is the case: when I am undergoing shame, the focus narrows down to the element(s) that individuate me in the shameful situation, and I experience time as a "frozen now" (Karlsson and Sjöberg 2009), as if all my future possibilities have disappeared. The holistic character of shame amounts to the feeling of being singled out. In the moment of shame, I experience myself as being nothing but the shameful individual that has been exposed, as if I were reduced to the shameful label that describes me in that moment ("the eccentric," "the drunken fool") and riveted to it. Again, this happens because, as Sartre (1969) puts it, a whole dimension of my being is outside of me, escapes my control.

In the final part of chapter 1 I looked at the controversial question of the role of others in shame, and quite particularly, to what extent and in which sense an audience might be necessary for shame. The claim that shame requires an audience cannot be defended in a literal sense, since solitary shame seems to be obviously possible (shame of failings nobody else knows about, retrospective shame). But many theorists defend that either an imagined or an internalized audience is always necessary. This prevents the further issue of how to characterize the audience, given that some forms of exposure to others are actually agreeable, as it can be the case in pride or love. A first way to approach this issue would be to say that the audience must be a disapproving one. But as we saw, this is not a satisfactory answer, because not all disapproving audiences have the power to cause shame, and some approving ones actually cause it too. In order to clarify these issues, I compared shame with embarrassment, humiliation and disgrace. These comparisons allowed me to establish two things. First, that as opposed to embarrassment, which is merely a feeling of social awkwardness, of being socially out of place, shame implies a feeling of deficiency or inadequacy that impacts my sense of self at a deeper level. And second, that attempts from other people or society at large to elicit shame in an individual through disgrace or humiliation do not necessarily and automatically cause shame, so an external disapproving audience is neither necessary nor sufficient for shame. Some authors propose that the further element that needs to be added for shame to arise is respect for this audience and its opinions. But in that case the issue then becomes: if the audience is internalized and has to command some respect from the ashamed subject, to what extent can we distinguish its assessment from the one that

the individual herself would perform with no reference whatsoever to any audience? Should we not rather stop construing shame in terms of audiences and say it is a private self-assessment of inadequacy? This question took me to chapter 2.

In chapter 2, I addressed accounts of shame explicitly as a moral emotion. The issue here is whether shame has any positive contribution to ethical sensibilities. I started by reviewing some theories that take shame to be counterproductive or even destructive for morality. One of the most prominent ones is championed by psychologist June Tangney and her colleagues. According to Tangney and Dearing (2004), who employ a functionalist approach to morality according to which "moral" means "prosocial," guilt is a productive force in our moral lives, while shame is morally counterproductive and psychologically damaging for the individual. In their view, the difference between shame and guilt lies in their objects of focus: shame focuses on the self, while guilt focuses on behavior. In shame we feel bad about the way we are, about some characteristic or feature of ours, while in guilt we feel bad about our actions or omissions, about having done something wrong, broken a norm or harmed somebody. According to Tangney and Dearing, presumably because self seems to be much more difficult to change or undo than behavior, shame leads to antisocial tendencies (shunning contact with others, lashing out in anger), and ultimately to low self-esteem, depression, and addiction. In contrast, guilt motivates pro-social efforts (apologizing, attempting to undo or compensate the harm done), and is not correlated to low self-esteem or addictions.

However, as argued in chapter 2, these conclusions are unwarranted for various reasons. First, because they are partially implied in the answer choices of the TOSCA questionnaires that Tangney and Dearing developed to evaluate shame- and guilt-proneness (see Ferguson and Stegge 1998; Luyten, Fontaine, and Corveleyn 2002; Giner-Sorolla, Piazza, and Espinosa 2011). Second, because they unjustifiably extrapolate the conclusions drawn from research into character traits (shame- or guilt-proneness) to single emotional episodes. And finally, because their functionalistic focus on morality as prosociality is too narrow (see Nelissen, Breugelmans, and Zeelenberg 2013). Tangney and Dearing define "moral" as "prosocial," but then they do not look beyond the individual experiencing the emotion, they do not look at how displays of emotion actually impact interaction and group relations in different scenarios. Nelissen and his colleagues (2013), however, have found that there are specific situations in which displays of shame tend to mend the social relation because they tell other people that the ashamed individual, in spite of her shortcomings, still has standards and cares about others. This is in line with the traditional, Aristotelian insight that shame is "the semi-virtue of the learner" (*Rhetoric*, bk. 2; Burnyeat 1980), an emotion that reveals that one possesses the right standards of what virtue amounts to and is aware of having fallen short of them.

A different type of criticism of shame as morally counterproductive comes from roughly Kantian takes on morality (see Benedict 2005; Dodds 2004; Leys 2009; and other examples criticized by Williams 2008). From this perspective, the problem with shame is that it makes us slaves of public opinion. It makes our self-assessment rely on reputation, on appearance, on what other people think, instead of on rational judgment based on independent criteria of the good. Further, according to Leys (2009, 131), shame undermines responsibility by placing the emphasis on identity, which is to a large extent out of my control, instead of on my actions, which under normal circumstances I can willingly initiate and control.[92] In other words, shame undermines our autonomy, and so taking it as the key to moral self-censorship makes us seem more like children than mature moral agents. This idea relates to the debate on the social character of shame that ended chapter 1: the heteronomy of shame is taken to be linked to its nature as a social emotion, one that requires an audience, be it real or internalized, and that embodies their assessment of myself. This idea has, of course, been contested in various ways, as I show in the remainder of chapter 2.

The strategies that different authors have adopted in order to defend shame as ethically productive often follow one of two paths: either they argue that, despite appearances, shame is a manifestation of our autonomy, or they strive to broaden the scope of what counts as morally relevant. One of the most prominent recent attempts to defend the autonomy of shame has been put forward by Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011). Their account of shame is formulated in terms of self-relevant values: those values that we care to exemplify in our lives, that we attach to as part of our identities (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, chap. 4). The self that, according to them, is assessed and at stake in shame is this cluster of self-relevant values, some of which are more central or important than others (therefore some instances of shame are much more acute than others). In their view, shame arises when "we apprehend a trait or an action of ours, which we take to exemplify the polar opposite of a self-relevant value, as indicating our incapacity to exemplify this self-relevant value even to a minimal degree" (Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 97). In shame, then, we see ourselves as acquiring an unwanted identity, one that goes directly against a self-relevant value. I feel shame, therefore, when *I* assess that I am not living up to *my own* standards. It is my autonomous assessment of myself that primarily counts. I rose an objection against this and other views that construe shame as manifesting our autonomy, such as Taylor's (1985). This type of account seems to underestimate how

[92] This is obviously a blunt statement that does not even begin to do justice to the many subtleties and debates in the philosophy of action. Leys' discussion of the differences between shame and guilt is more detailed than this gloss suggests. But her point here (and she is not alone in thinking this) is that, even making room for more subtleties, placing an emphasis on shame as morally significant greatly diminishes the moral importance of the voluntary, since shame can focus on many features over which one has no direct voluntary control. Highlighting the importance of shame, therefore, would seem to imply that identity is more important, or as least as important, for ethics as one's actions, which is considered very problematic.

our concern for reputation can be a force that on occasion pushes us towards heteronomy (FitzGerald forthcoming, sec. 2). FitzGerald's interesting proposal is that autonomy and heteronomy are not pure and mutually exclusive conditions, they come in degrees, and different instances of shame can fall anywhere along that scale. It is therefore right to argue that shame *can* be autonomous, but not always. Therefore, the moral value of shame cannot be made to depend on it always being autonomous.

The second position I discussed is Bernard Williams' (2008), who makes two crucial moves. The first one is to downplay the importance and reach of autonomy and reason. A person's reasoning capacities are limited, and so caring about other people's opinions is not only ethically positive, but even necessary: we could never find the ethically correct thing to do without talking to others (or perhaps we might every now and then, but not reliably) (Williams 2008, 100). Williams defends the hypothesis of an internalized audience as necessary for shame, and thus the second move that he makes is to reflect on the types of audiences that can actually make a person feel ashamed (since not all audiences do). He links an audience's capacity to make a person feel ashamed to the respect we have for such an audience, on the one hand, and to the world we would have to live in having lost the good opinion of this particular group or person, on the other.

Cheshire Calhoun (2004), whose position I discuss last, criticizes Williams for linking respect to the capacity of an audience to shame us, and develops her thoughts in the second direction— clarifying what it means to bear in mind the world I would have to live in. Calhoun argues that those who try to account for shame in terms of autonomy and heteronomy are mistaken and misinterpret what shame is about. According to her, shame operates on a dimension of morality where autonomy is not at stake. The main aim of her paper is to do justice to the shame of oppressed minorities, since for her accounts of shame as autonomous tacitly make minorities either morally immature or complicit in their oppression (Calhoun 2004, 135). She seeks to rescue the autonomy of the ashamed subject, while accounting for the way in which opinions we do not agree with may shame us, by disconnecting shame from autonomy entirely. According to Calhoun, Williams' account of shame ends up running into the same problem as accounts asserting the autonomy of shame. Postulating, as Williams does, that I have to feel respect for the other in order for her to have the power to shame me is not a satisfactory way of rescuing autonomy. Respect is still too strong a form of assent, and it compromises one's autonomy and moral maturity in the vexed cases where one feels ashamed of something one does not deem shameful. That is especially likely to be the case of oppressed minorities who are shamed by oppressors for the mere fact of belonging to that minority. If they feel shame when insulted or slighted on that account, does that mean that they respect their shamers? This is unlikely, she says.

Calhoun's strategy is to separate autonomy from giving weight to other people's opinions. While, in her view, autonomy has epistemic connotations and implies accepting a judgment as true, giving weight to other people's opinions is a practical matter. It is one thing to assent to some judgment being true, and it is another thing to acknowledge that a certain individual occupies a prominent position, or that a judgment is widespread, and therefore has an impact on my public identity. In other words, even if I disagree with the audience in their assessment of me, I recognize their power to shape a part of my identity. I recognize their influence on the world I will have to live in. Autonomy, for Calhoun, belongs to the domain of heuristics and deliberation; shame belongs to the domain of shared social practices. Both are a part of morality, in her view, but shame does not affect autonomy. It leaves it intact, because they operate in different domains.

An objection to Calhoun, however, is that many of the cases she has in mind could better be described as humiliation instead of shame, because in humiliation precisely, we feel the weight of the external judgment as aggressive, as affecting our reputation or social status, but we actively reject the truth of the criticism involved (see Deonna, Rodogno, and Teroni 2011, 117–18, 156–63, 232). This would actually be one of the crucial experiential differences between humiliation and shame. Shame implies a certain assent to the external assessment, which can be autonomous, but it can also be heteronomous if we allow other people's values to overrule ours, as FitzGerald (forthcoming) describes, drawing from Gabriele Taylor (1985). FitzGerald further argues that autonomy comes in degrees. Therefore, as far as normativity is concerned, instances of shame can be autonomous, heteronomous, or something in between, depending on various factors. Thus, the question of shame's autonomy or heteronomy does not allow us to settle the debate on the ethical role of shame fundamentally.

In chapter 3 I turn to a phenomenological investigation of shame: what is disclosed and apprehended when one experiences shame, and whether the phenomenon is as cognitively demanding as some of the above accounts seem to imply. One possibility is that the phenomenon in general might not be, but moral shame is a later variety that appears only with an understanding of full-blown moral normativity. But even if this were the case, is there something about shame that makes it particularly relevant to ethical issues? With that question in mind, in chapter 3 I turn to phenomenology, particularly to the early Lévinas and to Sartre. First I look at the account of shame that we find in the early Lévinas (2003), in his essay *On Escape*, and the reading of it that Giorgio Agamben (1999) offers. Lévinas' text explicitly says that shame is more basic than moral failings, sin, or motives for acting, even more basic than representations of ourselves. It is a feeling of fundamental insufficiency or vulnerability, of being a wretched being that can never overcome the vulnerability or fill the gap. Agamben (1999), looking for a resistant ethical core that can help us make sense of the dehumanization perpetrated in the Nazis camps, goes back to Lévinas' essay and finds this core in

shame: the reaction of a subject who bears witness to his own desubjectification. Shame, in his view, bears witness to the subject that is present in every desubjectification. However, Lisa Guenther (2012) argues that this is not the right way to analyze shame and its ethical import: in her view, Agamben confuses shame with humiliation and wrongly interprets Lévinas' "insufficiency" in terms of Heidegger's "being towards death." The insufficiency that shame reveals, if I read her correctly, is not that we are mortal, but that we are indigent, in other words, *dependent* on others in our very being.

Following the lead of Guenther's criticism, in the second part of chapter 3 I turn to Sartre, who interprets shame as the fundamental emotion of intersubjectivity. According to him (1969), in shame we are disclosed to ourselves as "being-for-Others," and we discover what he calls our objective dimension, we discover that a part of what we are is outside of our control, it lies in the gaze of the other. Shame, then, is crucial for intersubjectivity, because in it I apprehend the other as subject, which leaves no room for any skepticism about the existence of the other. Note, however, that as Reddy (2008, 125–26) suggests in her study of the development of self-conscious emotions, the "objectivity" I discover as a part of me is not the objectivity of a detached view from nowhere.[93] Indeed, it has to do with being perceived as a subject by another subject in interaction, someone I am in a relation with (Sartre 1969, 279–80). However, this leaves Sartre with a picture in which the relationship to another can only be thought of in terms of conflict: either I assert my subjectivity and objectify the other, as happens in arrogance, or I recognize the other as subject and apprehend myself as the object of her experience, as is the case in shame. Many have argued that this is far too negative and fails to do justice to the wide variety and fundamental character of human relations (see Zahavi 2012; Guenther 2011).

In an attempt to defend Sartre's views on intersubjectivity, Jonathan Webber (2011) argues that one has to interpret these claims in the context of Sartre's discussion of bad faith in *Being and Nothingness*. By doing this, Webber claims, one can see that intersubjective relations are only doomed in this way from within the project of bad faith. When we identify with personas and interpret others in terms of them, shame (and its flipside, arrogance) pervades interpersonal encounters. But when we are not living in bad faith, this is not the case. However, Webber's defense of Sartre rests on the assumption that shame is always a product of bad faith, but this conclusion does not do justice to shame. Even when we are not in bad faith, dependence on others can make us vulnerable to shame, because our

[93] Not even, originally, from a third-person perspective, if we want to distinguish between detached view and third-person perspective. Peter Goldie (2000, 1–2), for example, defends that a third-person perspective is still personal and perspectival, it is a view from somewhere. The view from nowhere is a (mostly illusory) ideal of some science and some "godlike" omniscient narrators in some novels, but it is not practically achievable or even conceivable, according to Goldie. This idea is relevant for my claim that merely witnessing something can be shameful: if having a third-person perspective simply means that I have chosen an angle to look at things, and I could have chosen another one, I can be ashamed of that choice.

projects and possibilities are more reliant on other people sustaining them than Sartre and Webber acknowledge. My analysis of Shakespeare's *King Lear* is meant to show this by testing the limits of Webber's defense of Sartre. The conclusion is that having my being outside, as Sartre proposes, entails dangers and can cause shame even when I am not engaged in a project of bad faith. Depending on others in my interpersonal self means that I am vulnerable to them, whatever my project happens to be. But embracing that vulnerability, as Cordelia does in *King Lear*, may be the only way of having a caring relationship with another subject.

In chapter 4 I turn to a reading of J. M. Coetzee's novel *Disgrace*. In this novel, we encounter David Lurie, a main character that at the beginning of the story is deeply self-deceived and deeply ashamed too. In my interpretation, the terrible events he goes through systematically destroy his self-fictions and make it impossible for him to resort to his usual strategies of self-deception (which could be interpreted in terms of bad faith). In spite of this, shame does not disappear with self-deception. He keeps feeling it, but it changes shape: it does not lead him to self-deceiving fantasies and antisocial and immoral behavior, but enhances his lucidity about himself and contributes to some of his most caring actions towards others. This further supports the idea that Webber's interpretation of shame in terms exclusively of bad faith is too narrow and does not do justice to the complexity of intersubjectivity in shame. The shame in bad faith can be applied only to what Nussbaum (2006, chap. 4) calls "narcissistic shame." In *Disgrace,* however, there are at least two forms of shame that are not caused by mechanisms of self-deception and that do not render themselves to interpretations in terms of bad faith: survivor shame and the moral shame of understanding oneself as a performer of harm.

The conclusion of my reading is not that shame makes David Lurie an ethically virtuous person. On its own, it does not. But together with other factors, shame works towards and supports his change of sensibilities. The type of shame Lurie is able to feel at the end of the novel resembles the shame that Michael Morgan (2008) advocates and that Antonio Gómez Ramos (2005) describes as arising when somebody else's suffering makes us question our position in the world, the cry for help of another that makes us feel powerless. The connection between shame and the project of bad faith in these cases is not clear at all. Indeed, what seems to be shameful is precisely my freedom, in exercise of which I harm the other or choose to disregard my complicity in the damage that is done to her.

SHAME: SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, RELATIONALITY AND CARING

Despite these issues, the view of shame I want to put forth is, roughly speaking, Sartrean. I wish to emphasize that I do not intend to provide a set of necessary and sufficient conditions for all experiences of shame because, as I said at the beginning, I think of emotional phenomena not as strictly discrete states, but as more or less blurry combinations of affective processes and cognitive determinations that cluster around foci. Differences are meaningful and important, but boundaries cannot be established with complete certainty, and the clustering is more a matter of Wittgensteinian family resemblance. Of course, I have strived to analyze some fundamental features of the experience of shame, but not all of them are common to all varieties of this emotion, and some may extend to other emotions (for example, the phenomenon "being-seen-by-another" is a central feature of pride too, while self-assessment is a central feature of guilt). With this in mind, my aim has been to make sense of the ethical relevance of this emotion, or rather, of some central varieties of it. There is a clear gap between accounts that focus on laying out the normative structure of shame, and those that seek to analyze its phenomenology. Is it possible to bridge this gap? I think so, and I think Sartre (1969) and Lévinas (2003), as well as Reddy's (2008) account of the development of the human mind, give us an important key to doing so, namely, *constitutive relationality*. In what follows, I present my conclusions on shame by spelling out first the kind of selfhood at stake in this emotion, then its intersubjective character, and lastly what I consider to be its role in our ethical lives.

As concerns the dimension of selfhood at stake in shame, elsewhere in this dissertation I have called it "the interpersonal self." By this I mean the process through which one is individuated (primarily) in interpersonal encounters. I write 'primarily' in parentheses because, as I said in my discussions of solitary shame, this dimension of selfhood eventually acquires, through self-reflection, self-concepts and narratives, a certain degree of independence from the face-to-face encounter with another subject. This independence, however, is limited, and in her recent critique of solitary confinement, Lisa Guenther (2013) has provided ample evidence and arguments to show how fragile our sense of self is and how unhinged self-experience becomes when one is completely cut off from all contact with others. In shame, then, I become self-consciously aware of the abovementioned process of self-individuation in interpersonal encounters, and of its results in terms of evaluations or identity labels. Self-relevant values play a role here, but I resist the idea that they constitute the self of shame, as Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) defend. Phenomenologically, the process of self-conscious individuation that takes place in shame involves something more than a negative self-assessment in terms of one or several of my features or my self-relevant values. In shame I stand out as separate, I feel put on the spot, singled-out. Even if the singling out happens in terms of only one of my many

features, shame feels as if my "whole self" were exposed. This happens precisely because in the shameful situation, I seem to be reduced to that, with no possibility of escape, I feel "riveted to myself" (Lévinas 2003, 64). Here embodiment meets intersubjectivity: because I am a body that is tied to time and place (I am not a disembodied consciousness, as angels or a gods might be) and because I relate to another that can place me in them, I am situated. And as León (2013, 211) puts it, it is this situated condition that I experience in shame: "to feel one's own individuation in shame experiences does not amount to consider oneself as a substance integrally evaluated, but rather to experience in intersubjective contexts *the irreducibility of one's own particular subjective situation in the world*" (emphasis added). As Sartre put it, a dimension of my being is outside, out of my control, and depends on my relation with the other. This is one of the reasons why it is dynamic and cannot be wholly captured by features and values. Furthermore, features are not enough to singularize a being: the situational dimension is necessary too. As I just explained, agreeing with Sartre, this situational dimension comes from the other, from the fact that she experiences me, that I am an object of her experience, located among other objects in the world.

My account of shame could therefore be called social insofar as I defend that the structure of the phenomenon presupposes and discloses to us the constitutive relationality of our being. But it does not require the actual presence or the explicit representation of an audience. It does however entail the awareness of a dimension of my being that can only be conferred to me by the other, as Sartre suggests, that only exists because I am a relational being. This awareness is essential for shame. In my view, solitary shame is built on that ground, but it requires a whole cognitive apparatus that public instances of shame do not require. When there is actual exposure to others, shame can be and very often is prereflective, as Sartre (Sartre 1969, 222, 260–61) argues, a shudder that requires no previous representation or thematic awareness of myself. Solitary shame, however, requires self-reflection, some kind of explicit self-representation that will make me aware of that objective aspect of myself that I do not control. It is a self-reflexive exercise of memory or imagination that requires a self-concept, a sense of an interpersonal self that is no longer strictly bound to the face-to-face relation, as it is still in infants, according to my reading of Reddy (2008, chap. 7). This explicit self-representation takes place in planning for the future, in examining my current situation and feelings (recall Phaedra and Anna Karenina trying to deal with their adulterous desires), and in what I have called retrospective shame, the shame felt in remembering a past episode. In none of these cases do I need to imagine what someone else would think of me. That process, in which I try to integrate my subjective experience with what others (might) think through imagination, is narrative, and the result is my narrative sense of self. But shame does not do that: it does not allow me to feel (re)integrated, but the opposite, it creates a split. Shame requires that I apprehend myself as having my being outside, as

having a whole dimension that is entirely out of my control, and that cannot be reintegrated through narrative.

With self-reflection, a self-concept, and norms in place, one can turn to oneself and examine oneself in a way that elicits shame without imagining a specific audience of onlookers, because one takes both roles upon oneself. But the sense of self at stake here will still be the interpersonal self, or the dimension of being-for-others, the dimension of my being that escapes my control because it arises in second-personal engagement. The values at stake are indeed related to my sense of self, but they are applied from this second-person perspective, the perspective of engagement with other people. And the key to this perspective is not only that it is evaluative, but that it entails the awareness of this limit to my power to shape myself, that I cannot help but be that faulty being. Even in solitude, I will feel naked, fixated, riveted to an unwanted identity; dependent on others in my very being; aware of the world I have or will have to live in. Evaluatively, in solitary shame I can be using my own standards and values to measure myself, as Deonna, Rodogno and Teroni (2011) propose, but what I apprehend and evaluate is that exterior dimension of my being which depends on the fact that I am an individual in the world interacting with others. Therefore, in my view, *shame is not social in the sense that it channels a social evaluation, it is social in the sense of exemplifying what it means to be a social being: a being who is constitutively dependent on others*.[94] Solitary shame, in any case, is not the central or primordial instance of shame, but a derivative one. Audiences do not merely intensify the negative character of self-evaluation through further concerns for reputation, but it is plausible to think, according to Reddy's (2008, chap. 7) research, that they make it possible in the first place.

This element of having one's own being outside might be subtle, too subtle perhaps to call my account fully social, but I don't take this to be a problem. I insist on this because I want to emphasize that the coming face-to-face with oneself in shame is very different from the coming face-to-face with oneself in anguish, as one can read this existential mood in Heidegger. As I argued in chapter 3, in shame we do *not* discover that we are mortal, that ultimately all our possibilities converge towards a vanishing point. In shame we discover that who we are is not entirely in our hands, that we have to negotiate it with others, that a dimension of our selfhood is intersubjectively built. Both dimensions of vulnerability are rooted in the body, in the fact that we are bodily beings, and perhaps in cases of extreme suffering they do tend to converge towards a vanishing point. I think of King Lear, of Agamben's interpretation of the death camps, and of two of J. M. Coetzee's characters, the Magistrate in *Waiting for the Barbarians* after being tortured and humiliated, and David Lurie at the end of *Disgrace*.

[94] And in this sense, many instances of guilt might turn out to be social too.

But this is another matter. The phenomena are different, and it is the intersubjective dimension, *not* being towards death, that belongs to shame and is at its root.

This is obviously not the meaning of "social" that is normally used to contrast shame and guilt, when they are distinguished in those terms. In that distinction, where shame is supposed to be social but guilt is not, "social" means reputation-based; it means that in shame I evaluate myself according to somebody else's opinion. It means, in short, "heteronomous." But the issue of the endorsement of norms or values is quite complex, as we saw in chapter 2: often we are ambivalent, doubtful, undecided, and our assent is only partial or halfhearted. As Chloë FitzGerald (forthcoming, sec. 2) remarks, autonomy and heteronomy often come in degrees and others can have the power to temporally impose their values on us, so that our actions or evaluations become heteronomous. In this sense, I suspect that even the emotion of guilt itself cannot be classified as autonomous so easily in all cases, but guilt is not the focus of my study, and I cannot offer any further arguments here. Be this as it may, as I said in chapter 2 criticizing Calhoun (2004), I do not think that one can establish whether shame is autonomous or heteronomous in all cases: it can be one, the other, or somewhere in between. But if one agrees, as I do, with Williams' (2008, 100) remarks about the limits of reason and autonomous self-legislation, this does not have to be a problem, neither for ethics nor for selfhood. The capacity that others have to influence our values and standards through our need for bonding and belonging and our fear of rejection can be a very good thing in many occasions, and as Aristotle (*Rhetoric*, bk. 2; Burnyeat 1980) argues, it might be crucial for education (see also Heller 2003; Ferlosio 2000).

Now, I am most definitely *not* arguing that shaming should be used systematically as an educational tool, first and foremost, because I have not done any research on education that could warrant such a claim, and second, because I see sham*ing* as much closer to humiliation, which is undermining and immoral in the context of education (and probably in all other contexts too). Indeed, given the consequences of shame-proneness that Tangney and Dearing (2004) identify, it does not seem advisable to work towards making people even more shame-prone overall, in the sense of being likely to react with shame in all kinds of situations. Rather, all I want to say is that the capacity to feel shame, the sensitivity to other people's attitudes to ourselves, the caring about our interpersonal selves, provides us with ways of identifying, and motivations to learn, social norms and standards. This is why shame can be perceived as a semi-virtue (Burnyeat 1980). We should not aim at obliterating that capacity, as Tangney and Dearing seemingly want, but at directing it to adequate objects in the right proportions. But then again, there is nothing particular about shame in this respect: this is a task one has to undertake for all emotions, which starts with basic self-regulation, and which Aristotle thought

was indispensable for virtue, as he argues in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[95] Identifying appropriate objects and regulating the intensity of the emotional episode proportionally to the situation is not a role solely for shame: other emotions, reason, and social input are necessary. *Shame does not give us all we need for ethics. But it is a crucial part of our ethical sensibilities*.

This takes me back to my theme that shame is an emotion of intersubjectivity. In my view, in the realm of ethical sensibilities concerning others, the ground level would be empathy, in the sense of "the experience of foreign consciousness ... a distinctive form of other-directed intentionality, distinct from both self-awareness and ordinary object-intentionality, which allows foreign experiences to disclose themselves as foreign rather than as own ... our general ability to access the life of the mind of others in their expressions, expressive behavior and meaningful actions" (Zahavi 2014, 138). But this simple apprehension of the other as minded or as a subject of experience, which is fundamental, does not take us nearly far enough ethically. Shame further adds a degree of mutual recognition, in the sense of my recognizing the other as a subject with the capacity to fixate me, and my dependence on her or him, as well as, importantly, the caring about who I am in that relation. This also entails a minimal form of caring about the other; minimal in the sense that in most common cases of shame[96] I care about her only insofar as my own being depends on her.[97] But more is needed for a fully ethical sensibility towards others: a proper openness to and concern for them, as explained in chapter 4, a sufficient degree of rational autonomy, and so on. This is why shame can be narcissistic, egoistic and immoral in some cases, where other elements are missing. But the capacity to feel it is part and parcel of our condition as intersubjective beings and a crucial element of our ethical sensibilities.

Let us look at these elements, recognition and caring, in turn. As far as recognition is concerned, apprehending oneself as the object of someone else's perception in shame, as I have been arguing following Sartre, implies recognizing the other as a subject, a subject with the power to recognize me in various ways or deny recognition to me. Recognition in this sense, however, does not need to be the high-order and cognitively demanding process it was for Hegel (1976); he was dealing with the process whereby a person becomes morally autonomous in the full sense of the word. But if we think of the interpersonal self in the terms I just proposed following León (2013, 211), then a minimal form of recognition can start at the level of this interpersonal self, where all I am recognizing is that the other has her own subjective perspective through which she situates me, and which is outside of my control. That may be deemed too little to give rise to shame, but then again one may think about

[95] See Burnyeat (1980) for an explanation of the Aristotelian path to virtue; see Goldie (2000, 111–19) for one of many recent endorsements of a version of this Aristotelian idea.
[96] With the notable exception of the "shame of the just man" (Levi 1989, 139) before the other's suffering.
[97] There are, of course, various forms of caring, such as compassion for instance, and the fullest form would be love, although I have also argued through Cavell (1995) that love is not without its ambiguities.

Derrida's (2006, 18–28) reflections on the shame that he feels on being seen naked by his cat. This is a complex case that could be interpreted in other ways (the cat as a trigger for his own private self-evaluation, for example).[98] Regardless of how we interpret it, however, recognizing that the other apprehends me from his own subjective perspective ought to be enough for a simple form of self-conscious emotion that constitutes the basis of the shame family, enough for experiencing the vulnerability that attaches to the fact that a dimension of my being is outside of me (see Reddy 2008, 129–36). In shame, I recognize the other as the subject on which that dimension of my being depends, I acknowledge that I depend on the other. This recognition of the other and acknowledgement of my dependence is a starting point for ethics, even though it does not entail nor require an explicit understanding of moral normativity yet. And recognizing the other as subject seems to be a necessary step to have an ethical relation with her. It is the ground of an understanding of myself as answerable, as a being upon whom claims can be placed that need to be answered.

As for caring about oneself and others, as Bernard Williams (2008) has argued, the contribution of shame to ethics has to do with the importance of what he calls our ethical identities, with recognizing how certain actions or features situate us in the world and in our relations with others.[99] I read Williams as defending that the weight and importance of ethical considerations partially rests on the fact that they have an impact on who one is, especially as far as the interpersonal self is concerned. In other words, ethical questions have existential and identity-defining dimensions. If we care about the morality question of how to act, it is to a certain extent because it bears on the Socratic question of how to live, or how to flourish in a very wide sense (Williams 2013, chap. 1). In shame, I care about who I am or who I might become; I care about my being-for-Others, and I care about the other as conferring me that being. This is why I said before that this is a minimal sort of caring about others, not a proper openness to them, and therefore can give rise to egoism and narcissism, as we saw at the beginning of *Disgrace*. But caring about who I am can be a powerful motivation to learn and change, a possibility that even Tangney reluctantly admits in some cases.[100]

[98] Which is connected in many ways with one of the central aspects of Coetzee's *Disgrace*, one which for reasons of time and space I addressed only superficially: the ethical significance of David Lurie's attitudes to animals, especially to dogs. See Gaita (2011, chap. 6) for some further thoughts on the treatment of this issue in *Disgrace.*

[99] He endorses the theory of the internalized other as a necessary feature of shame, and he says about this other that "he can provide the focus of real social expectations, of how I shall live if I act in one way rather than another, of how my actions and reactions will alter my relations to the world about me" (Williams 2008, 87).

[100] She writes that "shame may in some cases motivate productive soul-searching and revisions of one's priorities and values" in "non-shame-prone, high-ego-strength individuals" (Tangney and Dearing 2004, 126), and that it might offer a ray of hope for the reintegration of incarcerated offenders (Tangney and Stuewig 2004, 327). These admissions are far too narrow, as I explained in chapter 2, but one must not forget that they come from someone who has worked intensively to show the destructiveness of shame.

As Morgan (2008, 53–54) argues, because of the intersubjectivity of shame, the self-examination that it motivates must not necessarily conclude by endorsing the negative self-assessment implied in it. Another possibility is to challenge this assessment by looking at the circumstances that gave rise to shame. In other words, I can conclude that my shame indeed points to a shameful characteristic of mine that I ought to change. Or instead I can conclude that I have no such characteristic, or that there is nothing shameful about it, but the problem rather lies in my way of approaching the situation, my values or my relations to others, and I can strive to change that. In either case, shame would motivate a productive change. As I argued in chapter 4, in the case of David Lurie, shame forces him to confront himself time and again, and once his mechanisms of self-deception are dismantled, it enhances his lucidity concerning both his character traits and his relations to others. For a man who seems at the beginning of the novel to believe at least some moral norms to be inapplicable to him, or some rights to respect and privacy as not holding for some vulnerable subjects, shame is the emotion that prevents him from resting in perfect complacency when he abuses others. Because even if he does his best to conceal this from view through self-deceit, he is aware that a whole dimension of his being is out of his control. And as Sartre (1969, 278–80) also claims, this is not simply an abstract idea or an image locked up in the other person's head and disconnected from him; it is a real dimension of his being that affects in a very material way the world he lives in and his possibilities within it. As Williams (2008, 87) put it, shame can provide "the focus of real social expectations, of how I shall live if I act in one way rather than another, of how my actions and reactions will alter my relations to the world about me." That is the place from which the options for reflection and change that Morgan describes can take off.

Having said all this, Tangney is indubitably right in claiming that shame has an enormous crippling potential. But other emotions have it too, and again, the goal ought not to be to eradicate them, but to educate them so that they become as appropriate and proportionate as possible. Guilt is not appropriate in all situations and cannot do all the work, particularly when circumstances call for work on changing deep-seated character traits or general ways of relating to the world and others, as was the case for David Lurie. It is clear from the story that, severe as the case is, David's behavior to Melanie Isaacs is only the tip of the iceberg of what is ethically wrong with him. Or rather, it is a consequence or a manifestation of what is wrong with him. Offering her some form of reparation or a plea for forgiveness, staying within the logic of legal guilt, does not take care of half the extent of the ethical work he needs to do. As a matter of fact, in Coetzee's novel, the logic of guilt fails completely (it has no chance of succeeding), and shame does contribute to an ethical transformation. I do not mean to imply that this must always be the case. Indeed, in other situations guilt will be more appropriate than shame. I simply mean to say that both have their roles and cannot entirely substitute one another in all situations.

Morgan (2008, 26) offers another good example of a situation in which guilt seems uncalled for, but some response of ethical self-assessment, namely shame, still seems to be required. His example is recent genocides and the failure of Western powers to prevent them, the failure to fulfill the promise "never again" made after Auschwitz. Morgan's argument is that guilt over that failure would only be warranted for those, such as Ministers, Heads of State, high United Nations officials, or commanders of the peacekeeping troops on the ground, when there were any, who had the power to take concrete steps to intervene and prevent, or at least greatly reduce, the horrors that took place in Bosnia or Rwanda, among other places, and for various reasons turned a blind eye on them. But individual citizens of Western democracies, who followed these crises on the news, have nothing to feel guilty about on that account, as they had no such power. Still, the horrors are such that they demand a strong ethical response, and we (many of us at least) feel implicated in some way, and rightly so in Morgan's view. The response here, according to him, ought to be shame, the kind of "shame of the just man" that Levi (1989, 72–73) talks about and that Coetzee echoes.[101] It is a shame that ought to motivate us to try and change our sensibilities, perhaps collectively.

In the foregoing I have provided an analysis of shame from various perspectives, including psychology, moral philosophy, philosophy of emotion, phenomenology, and literature, with the aim of shedding some light on the controversies surrounding the role of shame as a moral emotion. My conclusion is that shame—considered in very general terms now—is not moral in the sense of always fostering morally right behavior and attitudes. It is moral (or rather, ethical) in the sense of providing a rich ground of sensibilities from which ethics can take off. Indeed, if we apply Williams' distinction here, shame is much more relevant for ethics than for morality. Getting more into specifics, which I haven't developed in this dissertation, different varieties of shame would have different roles when applied to ethics. Assuming that they are focused on the appropriate objects, the sense of shame, for example, protects us from doing immoral things and from exposing other people shamelessly, disgrace shame and solitary shame prompt self-criticism and motivate us to change, as does collective shame in cases like those proposed by Morgan. All varieties can go wrong and trigger crippling and destructive mechanisms, of course, but that is no reason to dismiss shame in general terms as immoral and destructive. Even survivor shame has been interpreted as having a deep ethical meaning, as attesting to an irreducible core of humanity, of intersubjectivity and human connectedness, of sensibility to standards of what we owe to each other (see, for example, Guenther 2012; Morgan 2008; Agamben 1999). Be this as it may, the common denominators are self-care, intersubjectivity, vulnerability, and a

[101] For the complete quote from Levi see p. 95. Coetzee (2004, 139) echoes it in a sentence quoted in ch. 1, pp. 28-29: "When some men suffer unjustly ... it is the fate of those who witness their suffering to suffer the shame of it."

degree of understanding of what it entails to be dependent on each other in our very being as social beings.

To sum up, the backbone of shame is a being who is embodied and situated and dependent on others in its very being. First and foremost dependent for life in a very material way, dependent for its bodily and mental well-being— as evidenced by separation anxiety and the devastating effects of isolation on development (see Rochat 2009). But also dependent on the dimension of who (s)he is, given the great impact that other people's opinions and social status can have on our public identities (Maibom 2010 traces the evolutionary descent of shame to a proto-emotion of appeasement in hierarchical groups, so shame would be linked to status from its origins). Indeed, the two dimensions connect, since other people's opinions certainly have an effect on the likelihood that they will sustain me in the necessary ways. This dependence makes me vulnerable, so that no matter how I see myself (whether I am self-deceived or not) or how the other sees me (whether she objectifies me or recognizes my singularity), I can feel exposed given the fact that I am not the only one "in possession" of who I am. I am not the one who unilaterally establishes my identity on all occasions, and I cannot sustain all dimensions of myself in isolation of everyone else. On a primitive level, shame is corporal and social: it is the actual look of an actual other that sends me back upon myself. And in Reddy's (2008, chap. 7) view, the primitive experience of interpersonal engagement is in all likelihood what gives rise to self-reflection and a concept of self. Once the self-concept and an understanding of some norms are in place, private, solitary shame can appear, but not before. Shame, therefore, contributes to ethics by virtue of its intersubjectivity (because in it I recognize the other as a subject and I recognize that my own being depends on her), and by providing a starting point for critical self-reflection, a reference point that can still be effective to some extent when the moral norms of a whole society have been so corrupted that they hardly work any longer as in the case of *Disgrace*. These core elements of shame are also dangerous of course: they can be undermining and they expose us to manipulation. But this is the case of most other emotions, as Shakespeare and the Greek tragedians knew, and it is the fate of social beings such as humans. These elements are part and parcel of that human condition, and they are necessary to navigate the space of ethics, although, again, they do not give us all we need in that respect.

FUTURE RESEARCH

In my view, the combination of such diverse perspectives on shame as those I have addressed in this dissertation can help shed some light on how we learn to grasp, understand and build normativity.

Authors who have studied shame have tended to either focus on the autonomy question or to analyze the phenomenology of the exposed self. By bringing them together and doing detailed case-analyses, I provide a framework in which the caring structure of shame (caring about others and caring about myself) grounds and prompts self-reflection (see Reddy 2008) and self-examination, and can sustain normativity. It is plausible to think that in the caring about who I am and the aversion of rejection, I find motivations to learn the regularities, then standards, that others apply to evaluate me, as well as to learn to apply those standards to others and myself. I have motivations to learn and I find the value and meaningfulness of norms. Though a mere sketch, this constitutes one of the main lines of work that remains to be done in the future.

Through this entire dissertation, and especially in chapters 3 and 4, an author has been in the background whose ideas I have not addressed for material reasons of time and extension of this study. I am referring to the mature Lévinas of works such as *Totality and Infinity*. He is indeed a crucial thinker when it comes to intersubjectivity and the ethical implications of the face-to-face encounter. But addressing his ideas in a way that could do justice to them and add something to my analysis of shame would have taken much more time than I had in my hands and added a great many (probably too many) pages to this dissertation. The motivation for studying Lévinas in the framework of a project such as this one would not be to add something to the already extensive scholarship on Lévinas' thought, but to apply his ideas to a detailed study of intersubjectivity and its ethical dimensions. In this respect, the concept of recognition, especially as articulated by Axel Honneth, would deserve much closer analysis. These are also projects for the future.

From the perspective of intersubjectivity and recognition, other topics of future study could be three emotions that have played important comparative roles in my study of shame, but which deserve closer attention in themselves: guilt, love, and pride. All three are objects of intense research already, but in the light of my foregoing work on shame, it would be interesting to study them as modes of recognition of others and ways of understanding intersubjective claims and responsibilities— in other words, as a part of a study on emotions and their role in building and understanding ethical normativity. The foregoing study of shame would constitute a first step in that project.

To sum up, my study of shame from a variety of heterogeneous perspectives has shed some light on its role in self-consciousness and on its intersubjective nature, but it has also given rise to further questions that remain to be explored. In a nutshell, I agree with authors such as Williams, Lynd, Scheler and Schneider that shame reveals something fundamental about the human condition. Namely, that shame embodies what it means to be a social being: a being who is constitutively dependent on others, even when she is not consciously aware of this dependence. The foregoing work has constantly

investigated and questioned the extent and limits of such dependence, an issue that is also at the core of ethics. My hope now is that the insights gained here will constitute a fertile ground for the inquiry into wider questions.

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